





A History of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church High Point, North Carolina

1856-2006

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Wesley Memorial

United Methodist Church

TOWARD A FUTURE WORTHY OF OUR PAST

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Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church

150th Anniversary 1856-2006

A History of Faith and Fellowship

Editor's Note: Wesley Memorial's written history as presented here is divided into two segments - one by Vera Idol and one by Virginia "Ginny" Gunn Fick. We have preserved "Miss Vera's" history in the same format she used when she wrote it, covering our church's first 104 years - 1856-1960. Her writing reflects not only the church's chronological history but many of the social mores of the time.



Miss E. Vera Idol



Virginia "Ginny" Fick

Ginny Fick has tirelessly researched the modern history of our church and her entry reflects the growth and change Wesley Memorial and society in general have experienced over the last 46 years - much the same way Miss Vera's history reflects the character of those early years.

Both in their own distinct styles have captured the 150 years of faith and fellowship that have evolved into the Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church of today.



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Part One 1856-1960

A History of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church High Point, North Carolina

by Vera Idol

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Part 1

A History of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church

1856-1960

By Vera Idol

Forward

The author of this history makes no claim to a complete and perfect record of the more than one hundred years that this church has been in existence. I am well aware of many omissions or incorrect use of many names; mistakes in dates; failure to include many important items. For all these errors I deeply and sincerely apologize.

However, this history is not complete. Before the Sanctuary of the new church building is ready for occupancy, the history will be re-written, and it is the hope of all those responsible for the writing of this document that all errata, all omissions all incorrections of all kinds may be corrected in the final book. You will help the historian immeasurably by giving these corrections in writing.

So many people have helped me in so many ways that I am fearful to list them, lest I should omit someone.

First of all to the committee, composed of the pastor, Dr. C. C. Herbert, Jr., Mr. Holt McPherson, and Mr. J. A. Johnson, for giving me the opportunity to write the history.

To Dr. Herbert for suggestions, reading the manuscript, and for much more invaluable assistance and encouragement; to John R. Peacock, for reminiscences about his father,

Dr. Dred Peacock, and the Peacock Bible Class; to Charles S. Welborn, for incidents, names, and dates from very early days; to Mrs. Octavia Perry for permission to quote from her book, The History of the First Presbyterian Church; to Mrs. J. F. Hayden for data about the Ladies Aid Society, the choir, Women's Wesley Class, and other history; to Mrs. Edith M. Sherrod and Mrs. R. K. Stewart for help about the choir and music in the church; to Mrs. Eugene Horney and Mrs. Raymond Welch for information about the Susannah Wesley Sunday School class; to W. M. Marr for a letter relating his services in the church; to Mrs. Mary Thompson Kearns Hancock for incidents of the pastorate of her father, Reverend J. E. Thompson; to Mr. H. C. Connor, contractor for Wesley Memorial on Main Street; to Mr. R. T. Amos for much information about the new church building; to V.A.J. Idol, for the story of his work in the church and Sunday School; and to the many others who have been gracious in giving me the time to talk with them personally or by telephone.

I am especially indebted to Mrs. W. L. Watson, secretary of the church for twenty-five years, who was able and willing to search out old records and make them available to me.

To Holt McPherson I am deeply indebted for guidance in selection and arrangement of material, for encouragement, and for editing and printing the history.

To the office force of Wesley Memorial Church, especially Mrs. H. L. Crowe and Mrs. Maxum Bingham, I give special thanks. The history could not have been written without their patient and willing cooperation in finding minutes, bulletins, quarterly conference records, and other papers without which the history could not have been compiled.

My sincere thanks to the typists, Mrs. H. L. Crowe and Mrs. C. E. Britt, for making correct type copy out of a longhand manuscript.

In a paper of this kind many seemingly casual remarks or bits of conversation give important leads. For all help of this kind I am grateful.

Thanks to all the congregation. It is your book. If I have omitted any important events or given mistaken information I am sorry.

Vera Idol

August 1960

Methodism came to High Point in 1856 when Peter Doub, Methodist preacher, and "perhaps the first preacher of any kind in High Point," preached once a month to a little group assembled in a grove near what is now East Washington Street.

That same year, a small one-room brick church was built in the grove on land given by R. F. Sechrest. No photograph of this church is extant, and there is no record of members during the first four years. In the beginning of the pastorate of Rev. C. W. Anderson (1860-1861), a "class" of seventeen – 10 women and 7 men – was recorded. [A photograph has since been found and verified as the first church building]

For more than 30 years the congregation worshipped in this little church. By 1888 the membership had grown to 154 and the Sunday School to 125. Twelve men had served as pastors.

The building was now too small, and during the pastorate of Rev. E. H. Davis (1887 – 1890), Washington Street Church was built on the same land, slightly in front of the first

church. Twenty-five years were spent in this church – years of great growth in spirit and numbers. Ten consecrated pastors served during these years, and dedicated men and women worked zealously for the upbuilding of a strong church, dedicated to God and the spread of His kingdom.

The Washington Street lot was small, so a larger site on North Main Street was bought. The name was no longer suitable, so, by a vote of the congregation, the name, "Wesley Memorial", was chosen for the new church. Dr. J. H. Barnhardt was pastor, and the late J. W. Harriss was chairman of the Building Committee.

The congregation moved into the new church in January 1915, with Dr. G T. Rowe as pastor. For some reason, not fully known, the cornerstone was not laid until March 1916. The church was dedicated on March 9, 1919.

The women of Wesley Memorial have, from the beginning, been "zealous for the Lord" and "full of good works." The Ladies Aid Society, Woman's Missionary Auxiliary, Woman's Society of Christian Service, and various other organizations have worked faithfully and hard, serving dinners, holding bazaars, flower shows, ice cream suppers, and in many other ways raising money to aid in the work of the church. In addition to many contributions to church and parsonage, three major projects were the following: the organ in the sanctuary installed in 1914 when the church was built; a chime of 13 bells in 1920; and Memorial Chapel, in 1948.

Wesley Memorial Church, from the first, has been a great missionary church, aiding and supporting churches, institutions, and missionaries, at home and in foreign fields. Sunday School and organized work with young people have all along formed an important part of the church program.

Twelve godly men, leaders in Western North Carolina Conference, have been pastors of the church. In addition, a large number of consecrated men and women have served as associate pastors and leaders of young people

By 1950, the church membership had increased to around 2100, and the Sunday School enrollment to nearly 1000.

This growth in membership again led to a need for more room, and many discussions regarding a larger site and a larger building were held.

In January, 1953, with Rev. Walter J. Miller as pastor, the first official action was brought before the congregation when Charles W. McAnally, Chairman of the Official Board, offered a resolution to purchase the Chestnut Street site. The resolution as passed.

In August 1953, R. T. Amos was appointed chairman of the Building Committee with authority to choose his own committee. Eight men were selected: W. B. Hall, J. A. Johnson, Charles L. Kearns, J. E. Millis, C. W. McAnally, Holt McPherson, W. T. Powell, and Curtis Smithdeal. Later T. Lynwood Smith and George W. Lyles, Jr. were added, and Elliott Wood was appointed to succeed W. T. Powell, deceased. Wagoner and Hartmann were architects and R. K. Stewart & Sons, General Contractor.

Countless meetings of many committees, quarterly conferences, and the congregation followed in the ensuing 6 ½ years. Men and women labored tirelessly, and the congregation gave generously of their means to the end that ground was broken for the new church on June 29, 1958, and the cornerstone laid on October 4, 1959. Dr. C. C. Herbert, Jr. has been pastor since 1957.

Now the new church stands, a house built for the worship of God and service to men, a gift of love and sacrifice from the descendants of that first little band of a century ago and the hundreds of other dedicated men and women who are and have been friends and members of Wesley Memorial Church.

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless His name." Psalms 100:4.



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Chapter 1

Our Leaders From Then to Now

The men who have served this church as pastors, from the days even before the little one-room brick building to this present time of readiness to move on into the new and greatly enlarged building, have been courageous and consecrated men.

To find anywhere thirty-five men, all with a will to work, and all fired with a zeal to advance God's Kingdom goes a long way toward explaining the growth of membership from seventeen in the first "class" in 1856 to 2269 in the 1960 membership.

These men may be divided into three groups, as they ministered in different areas and buildings. First there were the pioneers.

There is no proof that
Peter Doub, who preached
the first sermon under the
trees on Washington Street,
organized a "class." But the
men who followed him in
the brick church received
regular appointments from a
Methodist Bishop, and served,
each one, a longer or shorter
term as circumstances seemed to



Peter Doub 1856

term as circumstances seemed to demand. There appeared to be no stated term of tenure.

Their names and the years they served follow.

	-
James Bobbitt	1856-1858
O. J. Brent	1858-1860
C. M. Anderson	1960-1861
Braxton Craven	1861-1863
James Smoot	1863-1866
J. D. Carpenter	1866-1870
C. M. Pepper	1870-1873
W. C. Wilson	1873-1876
Peter Harmon	1876-1878
C. C. Dodson	1878-1881

J. J. Wrenn	1881-1883
S. V. Hoyle	1883-1887
E. H. Davis	1887-1890

Between the years 1888 and 1890 a new church was built called, because of its location, Washington Street Church, and ten pastors ministered to the congregation of this church.

E. H. Davis was the pastor when Washington Street Church was built.

E. H. Davis	
1887-1890	E. H. Davis
J. W. Jones	1887-1890
1890-1897	
S. H. Hilliard	1894-1897
(retired due to illne	ess)
T. A. Smoot July 1	897-November 1897
J. R. Scroggs	1897-1900
J. E. Gay	1900-1902
W. H. Bagby	1902-1905
T. F. Marr	1905-1907
J. E. Thompson	1907-1910
I W Barnhardt	1910-1914

During the pastorate of Dr. Barnhardt a

new location was chosen and the third building was erected. Since the name "Washington Street" was no longer applicable, a new name "Wesley Memorial" was selected and the present church arose.



J. W. Barnhardt 1910-1914

Again we have a list of names almost identical in number with those of the Washington Street pastorates.

Gilbert T. Rowe	1914-1918
William A. Lambeth	1918-1922
Emmett K. McLarty	1922-1926
John W. Moore	1926-1930
G. Ray Jordan	1930-1933

William A. Lambeth	1933-1936
Embree H. Blackard	1936-1941
C. Excelle Rozzelle	1941-1945
Paul Hardin, Jr.	1945-1949
W. Arthur Kale	1949-1952
Walter J. Miller	1952-1957
Chesley C. Herbert, Jr.	1957-

As the church grew in membership, the duties of the pastor became too heavy for one man to carry for the best interests of the congregation. So about 1926 Raymond Smith became associate pastor of Wesley Memorial. Following him was E. J. Harbison.

- 1929 Lee F. Tuttle, resigned 1931 to enter Yale Divinity School
- 1930 E. E. Wiley, served during the summer
- 1932 Liston Pope, resigned 1935 to enter Yale Divinity School
- 1936 Clarice Bowman, the only woman as associate minister
- 1938 Wallace Friday (7 months) resigned to join South Carolina Conference
- 1938 James E. Rink, resigned 1940 to enter active ministry
- 1940 Julian A. Lindsay, resigned to go into U. S. military service as chaplain
- 1946 Don Payne, returned to school in 1947
- 1948 E. M. Avett, served six years, retired
- 1953 E. Lester Ballard
- 1957 J. H. Waldrop, Jr. (7 ½ months)
- 1957 C. William Buckey, part-time. Full time from 1958.
- 1959 R. Delbert Byrum

The youth program has been one of the strongest forces in Wesley Memorial Church from its earliest days. Even such meager records as are extant of the little brick church give us more than a suggestion that Sunday School became an important part of the church. Beginning with Washington Street Church and continuing to the present time this concern has been continually expanding and growing, and more and more leaders have arisen for the work.

Too much credit cannot be given to the volunteer work of consecrated Christian leaders: however, it became apparent that a more centralized organization with leaders trained for youth leadership could direct the program more effectively. Therefore, since the early 1940's a number of leaders have held the position of Director of Christian Education. Earlier, a part of the duties of this position devolved upon the Associate Minister; as a matter of fact, these two leaders still work very closely together, and the number of volunteer leaders is even larger than before there was organized guidance. In the beginning a somewhat limited amount of formal training was considered adequate, but for a number of years now the requirements are more rigid. To be a qualified Director of Religious Education now requires a college degree with major work in this field plus two years of actual experience in the work.

The names appearing in the records as holding this position are:

~ 1943	Miss Mildred Whitener
~ 1943-1944	Miss Hulda Whitely
~ 1943-1945	Miss Minnie Mae Franklin
1945-1954	Miss Elsie Ellen Moore
1953	Mr. Richard J. Crowder
	(summer camps)
1954-1957	Mrs. Marjorie P. Case and
	Miss Hulda Whitely
1957-1958	Miss Sarah Leake, Miss Hulda
	Whitely
1958-1959	Mrs. J. W. Austin, Jr.
1959	Miss Ann Tyler
1958	Richard Howle
	(summer camps)
1959	Oscar Dowdle
	(summer camps)
1960	Oliver Clark (summer camps)

Though an entire chapter is devoted to the prominent place music has always held in our church, those who have directed the choirs should certainly have a place among the leaders of activities.

Five names have appeared as directors of choirs:

J. Gurney Briggs	1915-1919
Dan W. Smith	1919-1925
J. Gurney Briggs	1925-2947
Miss Mildred Crowder	1947-1953
W. Howard Coble	1954

Organists whose names are available:

Miss Bettie Sapp (the late Mrs. J. E. Kirkman), who played the reed organ in the first little brick church and later the piano in Washington Street Church.

Miss Clara Boyd

Dan Smith 1919-1925 Mrs. Bascom Whitaker 1922-1947 Mrs. Randolph Phillips 1950-1951 Dr. Carroll S. Feagins 1954 –

Mrs. Charles W. McAnally

Miss Mae Kirkman

The members of the church staff carry on the work of the church to a degree of which the members as a whole may not be sure. Too much credit cannot be given to them for the smoothness with which the machinery of the church runs. From seeing that the elements are ready for the communion service and serving of the many meals to many organizations, to washing dishes, and keeping church buildings warm in winter and clean the year round dedicated service has been given. Typing, keeping records, writing letters, gathering news for bulletins, taking dictation, and answering countless questions fill the week day of the devoted church office staff. To keep the financial records of an organization which has grown to the proportions of Wesley Memorial demands a clear head, the mathematical efficiency of a strict accountant, and many hours of hard work.

It is impossible to include here all the names of those who have worked in all these positions, especially as clerical help and individual secretaries. Through the years, these are some of the names that have appeared in the records:

- In 1943 Miss Elzora Strupe, as secretary and treasurer
- In 1927 Mrs. W. L. Watson was elected secretary and treasurer and served until 1953.
- In 1950 Mrs. H. L. Crowe was elected secretary, a position which she is holding in 1960.
- In 1953 Mrs. Maxum Bingham was elected treasurer with Mr. S. C. Kirkman as assistant; they still serve in 1960.
- In 1949 three hostesses were named: Mrs. Hunter Sechrest, Mrs. Ray Nibbelink, and Mrs. E. L. Harville.
- In 1954 Mrs. Harville became sole hostess and continues in this position in 1960.
- Since 1935 Thornie White has served as a faithful and efficient sexton, always present for all services throughout the entire week, except for a few occasions when illness kept him from his duties.
- Ophelia Archie served as an efficient maid for a number of years. With the expansion of buildings in the new church, additional help in these departments is being added.

In June 1960 a complete roster of the organization of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church for 1960-61 was enclosed in the church bulletin, mailed to church families, and distributed at the services on Sunday. Many of these people will be mentioned in other chapters, but even allowing for repetition, it seems fitting to include here the names of the ministry, officers of official boards, and the church staff.

The Ministry

C. C. Herbert, Jr., Minister

C. W. Buckey, Associate Minister

E. Delbert Byrum, Minister of Education

W. Howard Coble, Minister of Music

Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Stewart,
Missionaries to Cuba
Rev. and Mrs. Edwin A. Hackney,
Missionaries to India

Officers of Official Board

Chairman of the Official Board

George W. Lyles, Jr.

Vice Chairman

James H. Millis

Secretary

Mrs. H. L. Crowe

Treasurer

Mrs. Maxum Bingham

Assistant Treasurer

Mr. S. C. Kirkman

Church Staff

Director of Children's Work

Miss Ann Tyler

Church Treasurer

Mrs. Maxum Bingham

Church Secretary

Mrs. H. L. Crowe

Staff Secretary

Mrs. Paul Bulla

Receptionist

Mrs. C. E. Britt

Hostess Organist Mrs. E. L. Harville Carroll S. Feagins

Organist

Mrs.

IVII'S.

Charles W. McAnally

Building Superintendent

J. E. Horney

Maid

Lera Ingram

Sexton

Thornie White

Sexton

William Simmons



Chapter 2 Methodism Comes to High Point

In 1845 surveyors were laying out a route through the weeds and fields of North Carolina for a plank road which Mr. William Welch, whose business judgment his neighbors greatly respected, recommended as a step toward progress for this part of the state. He proved his faith in it by buying stock in it, and was receiving dividends from his investment. By 1854 this road was completed from Fayetteville to Salem, a distance of 130 miles, the longest continuous plank road so far chartered in the State.

This old plank road was an ingenious piece of road building. Mrs. Charles Perry states that several versions exist as to the way the road was constructed. "Some say the boards, varying in width, but two inches thick and eight to fourteen feet in length, laid loose across the road bed, while others claimed that three sleepers, or stringers, were laid on the edges and middle, and that boards of pine and oak were nailed to the stringers. They were cut on an angle so a wagon, or other vehicle, accidentally getting off the road, might easily be pulled on to it again."

There are still a few old-timers in High Point who have vague memories of rough riding in horse-drawn vehicles over segments of this old road.

Two years before the completion of this stretch of the plank road, in 1852, surveyors were laying out the route for a state-owned railroad from Goldsboro to Charlotte. At the intersection of the plank road and the route for the railroad a stake was driven. designating the spot as the highest point between Goldsboro and Charlotte. It was marked "High Point".

A number of far-seeing farmers in the surrounding country began to buy land in the area of this intersection, and some of them to build homes. Among the owners were Solomon Kendall, W. F. Bowman, George G. Mendenhall, J. R. Mendenhall, Seborn Perry, Eli Denny, William Welch and others. Again William Welch's business acumen was evidenced by an advertisement in the Greensboro Patriot of lots for sale. and this prophetic statement: "The location is healthful and promises fair to become the location for one of the most thriving towns on the entire railroad."

To Eli Denny and William Welch seem to go the credit for the name of the new town about 1855, from a note kept by Mr. Denny, Mrs. Perry quotes: "Mr. William Welch and I favor the name of High Point for this locality."

It is pertinent to the history of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church to note that Seborn Perry was the grandfather of the Ingram family who have been, and are, active and prominent members: Fred P., Lawrence, Mrs. Albert Hart, and Mrs. Phil Warner, and the late Charles Ingram; and that William Welch was the great-grandfather of J. Welch Harriss and Mrs. Elizabeth H. Covington, and the grandfather of V.A.J. Idol and the author of this history, of this congregation, and Mrs. Vera Idol Coe of First Methodist Church and V.H. Idol of Madison, N.C.

It was only a year after the name "High Point" was adopted, in 1856, that Methodism had its beginning in the village.

No history of Methodism anywhere can begin without going first of all to its originator John Wesley, "the father of Methodism". Although he never ceased to be a clergyman in the Church of England, he, along with his little band of "Methodists," as their fellow-students at Oxford somewhat derisively called them, was shut out of the

churches because of his new enthusiasm in his religious experiences, especially after that never-to-be-forgotten experience at Aldersgate, but he continued to preach in fields and houses, wherever opportunity afforded.

In 1735 he came to America as a missionary to the Indians in Georgia, but his ministry was not a success, nor was his whole American sojourn a very happy experience. So somewhat hastily he made his way to Charleston, S.C. and from there took ship back to England. There for the next fifty years he preached and organized classes, or societies of Methodists. During these years he traveled mostly on horseback 5,000 miles and saw his classes reach 135,000 members.

Methodism in America dates from 1766, when Phillip Embury, influenced by a godly Methodist woman, Barbara Hock, organized a class and began to preach in his own house. Later Embury preached and held his meetings in a loft in New York City, famous as the birthplace of Methodism in New York City.

About the same time Robert Strawbridge began preaching in Maryland. An old record states "These two societies were organized into the Methodist Episcopal Church at a Christmas conference on December 24, 1784 in Baltimore, Maryland. Francis Asbury, first Methodist bishop and great Methodist pioneer was a great leader of this church."

A few years earlier than this, about the time of the outbreak of the American Revolution, John Doub came from Germany to America. After pausing briefly in Pennsylvania, he came to North Carolina and settled in Stokes County.

His wife, Eva, of Swiss parentage, was born in Pennsylvania, but had been brought by her parents to Stokes County when she was eight years old. At fifteen she had joined the Dutch Reformed Church.

It was in Stokes County that John Doub met young Eva, married her, and established a home. Nine children were born to the couple, the youngest of whom they named Peter.

In 1780 a Methodist preacher, Rev. Andrew Yeargin, came from Virginia to preach and was invited to stay in the home of John Doub. On his next visit to the community he organized a society composed of six or eight members. John Doub and his wife joined the society, and John became a local preacher. He was ordained a deacon in Davidson County in 1802.

At a camp meeting in the same year, 1802, Peter Doub, then a little over six years old, was impressed with the importance of being a Christian.

On October 15, 1817, he united with the Methodist Church. He felt called to preach and was received as a probationer. After a few months as probationer, at the Methodist conference at Norfolk, Va., in February 1818, he was appointed to the Haw River Circuit in North Carolina as assistant to Rev. C.S. Mooring.

He was a man of great mental and physical power, a great preacher and a great revivalist and had a long and vigorous ministry in the church. He served twenty-one years on circuits, twenty-one on districts, four on stations, one as a temperance lecturer and three as professor of Biblical Literature at Trinity College, now Duke University.

In 1821 he married Elisabeth Brantley of Chatham County. Their son, W.C. Doub, was once a professor at Greensboro College in the early days when it was Greensboro Female College. He also was a great preacher and became a great bishop.

Peter Doub died on August 24, 1869 at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Charles Green Yates in Greensboro.

In 1856, Peter Doub, then traveling the Asheboro circuit, preached his first sermon in High Point, the first Methodist preacher, and "perhaps the first of any sort that preached in the village." This was three years before High Point received its charter in 1859 and was incorporated as a town. There were then about 590 people living here.

The poet's words, "The groves were God's first temples" describe the introduction of Methodism into High Point. Before there was any church building of any sort, Peter Doub, when the weather was favorable, preached once a month to a small gathering in a grove on what is now East Washington Street, just west of the site on which Washington Street Methodist Church later was built. [Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South]

The late Dr. Dred Peacock, who compiled an excellent and comprehensive history of the first sixty years of this church, wrote of its beginning: "A small number of faithful followers of John Wesley came together and laid some logs on the ground on which were placed planks to form a rough floor where the little band would gather for worship whenever by chance any Methodist preacher happened to pass this way."

Sometimes Peter Doub, or other preachers who passed through, preached in the upper room of Wiley Sheets' store on the site of what in later years became the office building of Jones and Peacock on the north corner of North Main and English Streets. At other times the preaching was held at "a store built in a grove between Campbell's new store and Brother Charles Irvin's, who lives upon the corner to (sic) the present brick church. This location is about where Beeson's Hardware supply and tinner's shop stood on North Main Street.

There is no record of the class organized by Peter Doub, but the probability is that he did organize such a class. But whether or not there was a formal organization, the roots of Methodism had sunk deep into the soil of the small settlement, and the time was ripe to build a house in which services could be held, whatever the weather.



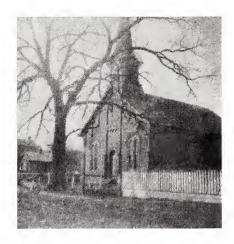
Chapter 3 Early Years: The First Building

A small one-room brick building, erected sometime during 1856, was the first house of worship for the Methodist congregation. It was built somewhat to the right at the rear of the later enlarged church on land given by R. F. Sechrest, the father of Joe and Jake Sechrest, some of whose children, grand-children, and great grand-children are now members of Wesley Memorial Church, Grand-children of Mr. Joe Sechrest are Elizabeth Gurley, Joanne and Nancy Sechrest, and Robert, Bud, and Mrs. Virginia Hoskins Evans, all of whom take an active part in the work of the church today. Diagonally across Washington Street was the lot given for a parsonage by Wiley Sechrest and Mr. and Mrs. R.J.Bell.

The little church building was of brick manufactured near the site of the present Oakwood cemetery, bought at a cost of four of five dollars a thousand. The late "Uncle Henry" Sechrest, who in his later years was a caretaker of the cemetery, was then a boy of fifteen and helped to make the brick and build the church.

All services of the church – preaching, Sunday School, and other activities – were held in this one room for over thirty years. Sometimes the little building would not hold the congregation. On these occasions people stood outside the church, and the preacher preached from the doorway. Unfortunately there is no picture of the church extant. [a photograph has since been found and verified as the first church building]

Mrs. Perry, in her history of the First



First church building

Presbyterian Church, says that in 1857, before the Presbyterians had a building and the weather did not permit them to hold their services under the "Big Oak Tree" which was their meeting place, their pastor, the Rev. Pleasant Hunter Dalton, would hold services in the Methodist Church on any Sabbath when the Methodists were not holding services. So an early bond developed between the two denominations. Other denominations also used the building, one holding Sunday School in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

After Peter Doub ceased to minister to the congregation, Mr. J.W. Jones was sent to High Point, but he did not stay, and the presiding elder of the district sent T.L.



C. M. Anderson 1860-1861

Triplett as pastor in charge. There is no date of this ministry.

C.M. Anderson succeeded Mr. Triplett, and it appears that it was during his ministry that the "class" was organized. In a "class-book," kept by Mr.

Anderson, it is stated that there were "7 males and 10 females in full connection." The full list of names is not available. Of those included, the first name on the roll was James H. Moore, designated as "classleader." Other names were: W.F. Bowman, Wiley Sheets, A.J. Bain, James Campbell, J.L. Sullivan, William Suits, A.J. Willis, E.D. Lindsay and A.B. Smith. Nine names were added during the ministry of Mr. Anderson, making twenty-six as a nucleus of the first congregation.

At the New Bern conference in December 1858, Trinity College, in upper Randolph County, and High Point were combined. So as early as this, there began the close connection between Trinity College and High Point. How many of our early members received their education at Trinity College – Dr. Dred Peacock, Mr. G.H. Kearns and his brother, the late J.E. Marsh, and J.W. Harriss – to mention only a few. Randolph County furnished to High Point many sturdy citizens, and many of them received their education at Trinity. And after Trinity College was moved to Durham and became Duke University, it has been the source of education for hundreds



James B. Bobbitt 1856-1858

of Wesley Memorial's young men and women.

In the year 1858, J.B.
Bobbitt was assigned to the pastorate of the combined churches. This arrangement lasted for a year; then the Conference, meeting in Beaufort in December 1859, designated High

Point and Jamestown as a station and sent J.F. Smoot to the charge. Membership now numbered forty-five. There were among the members four slaves: Amanda Bowman, Mary Bowman, Bettie Lindsay and Susan Lawrence. Jamestown at this time had twelve colored members.

In 1859 a revival was held with the pastor and one J.W. Andrews doing the preaching, and several were added to the church. According to a contemporary record, "several valuable members were received by certificate, and the church is now in a healthy

condition. Altogether the prospects for Methodism seemed quite cheering. The Lord gave us a good year, and acceptable, and may many souls be added – even such as shall be everlastingly saved."

In the minutes of the annual conference held in Salisbury in December 1860, it was recorded that High Point reported alone. Mr. O.J. Brent was sent to the charge. The following updated and unsigned entry in the church ledger was made apparently by the pastor in 1861: "I was appointed to the High Point station at the Salisbury conference on December 5, 1860. To the last of April everything went harmoniously. Just then the present unholy war on the part of our enemies began which so distracted the minds and hearts of the members that they have not recovered from it yet. In April there was a glorious revival, but it was brought to a sudden end by the war. For about four months the place was full of soldiers. (The little brick church was used as a hospital for soldiers.) That prevented the spiritual growth of the church. People were not supporting the church, and if men refuse to pay liberally, they reject a means of grace....it will prevent progress. They will retrograde."

Attached to this document is the following tabulation:

Members (1859-1863) 66
Class at High Point 72
Probationers (1860) 17
Baptisms by J.F. Smoot (1860)
6 infants, 12 adults

Baptisms by O.J. Brent (1861)

3 infants, 1 adult

During the year 1860, High Point and Trinity again appear to be combined. Dr. Braxton Craven was then



Braxton Craven 1861-1863

president of Trinity College. Because of the Civil War, the college was denuded of students, so Dr. Craven served as pastor of the High Point-Trinity Station from 1861-1863.

A bit of interesting history appears in a Wesley Memorial Church bulletin for September 25, 1921, as the name of Mrs. Temperance Maynard of 209 West Green Street was listed as the person in the church who had been a member longest. She had jointed the church on April 7, 1861.

From 1863 to 1866 James Smoot served as pastor. In 1866 High Point joined with Company Shops (now Burlington) with W.C. Wilson as pastor, and in 1867 Trinity was again joined with High Point and Company to make one charge. J.D. Carpenter was sent as pastor and served until 1870.

The following note from 1868 is extant: "Minutes from the first church meeting for 1868 was opened with religious exercises by the preacher in charge. The first regular business was to elect a secretary which resulted in the election of S.W. Brown. The roll was then call (sic) and absent tees (sic) noted. The name of the Brother George Williams was erased from the clafs (sic) book for none (sic) attendance. The following bretheren (sic) were appointed as finance whoos (sic) duty it shall be to make and (sic) estimate of what each member shall pay to the church, vis. J.A. Baine, P. Taylor, M. Jarrell. Sunday School Committee, Aurelia Bowman, B. Clark, Mary Campbell."

It is interesting to recognize M. Jarrell as Manliff Jarrell, a leader in the early business and community affairs, founder of the well-known Jarrell Hotel situated for years on the corner of South Main and West High Street, and grandfather of an active member of Wesley Memorial Church, Mrs. Pauline Simmons Wertz and the late W.D. Simmons.

Other descendents are members of the present congregation.

B. Clark, mentioned on the Sunday School Committee, was Mrs. Bettie Clark who was the wife of David L. Clark, first photographer and portrait painter in High Point.



C. M. Pepper 1870-1873

She was High Point's first music teacher, and was the great aunt of the late S.C. Clark, important realtor and for a number of years a leader in the men's work at Wesley Memorial Church. She was the great aunt of Mrs. Helen Clark Austin, the first missionary from Wesley Memorial congregation, and of Mrs. Fred W. Joyce, present member of the church, an active leader in young people's work.

From 1870 to 1873 C.M. Pepper was pastor. In 1872 High Point and Thomasville were combined and continued as one charge until

1888.



W. C. Wilson 1873-1876

Of interest to many people of the congregation is the announcement in the record that on June 9, 1873 under the pastorate of Mr. Pepper, Miss Betty Sapp joined the church. Miss Sapp is remembered by hundreds

of the members of Wesley Memorial as Mrs. J.E. Kirkman, one of the leaders in the women's work of the church from the early days until her death in 1949. She was the mother of Mrs. Forrest H. Murray who is continuing to carry on in the same pattern of activity as that of her mother in all church affairs. Granddaughters of Mrs. Kirkman who are members of the present congregation are Mrs. Betty Hunt Pitts and Miss Pat Murray. Two grandsons, Bill and Bob Pitts, are members of Wesley Memorial.

Miss Betty Sapp was fourteen years old when she joined the church, and in the church



C. C. Dodson 1878-1881

bulletin for May 7, 1933 she was mentioned as the present member who had been a member for the longest period of time.

Mrs. Kirkman also appeared in the early records in another capacity. In her *History of the First*

Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Perry relates that about 1882 Miss Eliza Fisher, organist of the Presbyterian Church moved to Salisbury, and there was no member of the congregation who would play the "piper." Miss Betty Hunt Sapp was organist for the Methodist Church, and since the two churches held services on different Sundays, she became organist for both Presbyterians and Methodists till Miss Fisher returned to High Point.

High Point Church was never, strictly speaking, a part of a circuit. For thirty years it was combined with one or more churches of other villages to form a pastoral charge. It became a station in 1888 under the pastoral charge of E.H. Davis, with a membership of one hundred and fifty-four. There were at this time one hundred and twenty-five in Sunday School. Eighteen years elapsed from the erection of the little brick church and its existence as a station before its membership reached five hundred.

Between 1884 and 1889 High Point was in Trinity College District which was discontinued when the North Carolina Conference was divided into the Western North Carolina Conference and the eastern conference, called the North Carolina Conference.

Dr. Dred Peacock, one of the great men of Methodism in High Point, beloved and scholarly teacher for many years of the class that bears his name, and father of two of our active and important leaders, Mr. John R. Peacock and Mrs. Odelle Peacock Marsh (Mrs. Everett Marsh) and grandfather of Jack Peacock (John R., Jr.), Mrs. Robert Stone, and Jimmy Marsh, the church is indebted for his comprehensive history of those early days of Methodism in High Point and the years spent in the little brick church from 1868 to 1888 or 1890. Dr. Dred Peacock wrote: "To whom much is given much is required. The spirit of love is infinitely more precious in His sight than all the gifts of temples made by the Pharisees."

In 1916 a cornerstone was laid in a third church, Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, and on the evening of that day, Dr. Dred Peacock read his history of those days and



J. J. Renn 1881-1883

the nearly thirty years in a second and larger Washington Street Church. By 1916 High Point had already become an important industrial center, and Dr. Peacock's solemn words designate the position he craved for this church: "This church stands as a silent but

mighty sentinel to guide and guard the people of this busy hive of industrialism." And his closing words were even more significant: "Let us hold the light steady, and may all who go in and out with us take knowledge from our walk that we have been with Jesus, the Christ. And may the Lord of Hosts be with us yet, lest we forget, lest we forget."



Chapter 4 Washington Street Church

For thirty years the little brick church housed the congregation of the Methodist Church in High Point. Records are not available of the marriages performed, infants baptized, and burial services held within its walls, but we may be sure that many happy associations as well as sad memories bound the hearts of its members to this sacred house.

But since 1856 a whole generation had passed, the membership had increased; four other denominations had churches in the town - Presbyterians, Friends, Baptists, and Episcopalians; the population of the town had grown to approximately 2,500; so the time had come for the congregation to move out to a larger house of worship.

It was during the pastorates of Rev. E.H. Davis and Rev. John W. Jones, in the years from 1888 to 1890 that the second church building was erected. Little is known at this date of the actual building of the church, the men who constituted the building committee. or the cost of the building and the method of financing it. So far as the records show, none of the members of the early church are living now. The Rev. E.H. Davis was the father of Mrs. Vesta D. Sale, an active member of the present congregation but she has not found among her father's papers any records of the building. Mr. Davis lived to be 87 years old. He died in 1958 in Louisburg, N.C.

However, photographs of the church are extant, showing it to be an attractive building constructed in the best style of church architecture of the time. It was built on the same lot as the first building, slightly in front of it, facing Washington Street, and only slightly withdrawn from the street.

There were two entrances into vestibules on the east and west sides of the front of the church. Double wooden doors at the top of about eight or ten steps led into the vestibules with other double doors opening into the main auditorium if the church. The church consisted of this one large, rectangular room, but the front of the building between the vestibules could be separated from the rest of the auditorium by a rolling partition. During the Sunday School hour, this room was used for the primary department, and at other times it could be used for youth meetings or other small groups. On special occasions this partition was rolled up to create added space in the auditorium.

The altar was at the rear of the church with a balustrade in front, and the pulpit stood upon a platform elevated two steps above the floor of the auditorium. The choir occupied a recess at the rear of the pulpit, and the only access to the choir was from the right and left by way of the altar. The piano stood against the rear wall of the recess.



Washington Street building 1888-1914

Sunday School was held in the main auditorium. After the opening exercises were held, the children were sent to the primary room where for many years Mrs. A.J. Owen, one the most devoted women of these early years, and one the most zealous workers, was superintendent. A



Samuel H. Hilliard 1894-1897

few women in our church today remember her faithful service, and that of Miss Pattie Newlin, another of the consecrated teachers. The young people and adult classes were held in specified areas in the church auditorium, each class having as many pews reserved as were necessary to accommodate the enrollment of the classes. The "Amen Corners" on the sides of the auditorium with pews facing the altar were reserved for the Men's and Women's Bible Classes.



Thomas A. Smoot 1897

This building was used from about 1890 to 1915, or for about twenty-five years. There is no record of a discussion as to the name of the church. Obviously, it simply took the name from the location and became Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church South.

After Rev. E.H. Davis (1887-1890) and Rev. J.W. Jones (1890-1894), eight other pastors served in Washington Street Church.

Rev. S.H. Hilliard whose pastorate began in November 1894 but was terminated by illness in the summer of 1897.

Rev. T.A. Smoot who completed his term serving from July 1897 to November 1897.

Rev. J.R. Scroggs (1897-1900)

Rev. J.E. Gay (1900-1902)

Rev. W.M. Bagby (1902-1905)

Rev. T.F. Marr (1905-1907)

Rev. J.E. Thompson (1907-1910)

Dr. J.H. Barnhardt (1910-1914), in whose term as pastor a new church was built.

Dr. Gilbert T. Rowe, who came to the charge in November 1914 before the congregation moved into the new church in January 1915, and remained until 1918.

Mrs. Mary Thompson Hancock, daughter of Rev. J.E. Thompson, recalls some interesting events that occurred during and before her father's pastorate, and remembers names of many active members of that time.

She has heard her father tell of the District Conference held in the little brick Methodist Church about 1875. Mr. Thompson, then a senior at Trinity College, walked the five miles to town and was licensed to preach during the conference.



W. M Bagby 1902-1905

He related that there was no organ at that time, and the hymns were "histed" by the preacher. There was no way to heat the church, he said, and the women brought hot rocks and bricks to be used as feet warmers. There was no parking problem in those days. Horses and mules were unhitched and tied out under the oak trees surrounding the church. Dinner was brought in baskets on preaching days, and eaten picnic-fashion.



T. F. Marr 1905-1907

When Mr. Thompson came to Washington Street Church as pastor in 1907, there were 225 members. Prof. George H. Crowell, superintendent of the High Point Graded School, was superintendent of the Sunday School, Miss

Clara Boyd was pianist, and among the choir members she remembers were Mrs. J.J. Farriss (now Mrs. R.K. Stewart), Miss Edith Moore (Mrs. A. Sherrod), Mary Thompson, Virge Garrett and Al Burns.

Stewards whose names she recalled were J.W. Harriss, W.G. Bradshaw, J.W. Sechrest, S.L. Davis, J.R. Kirkman, J.P. Redding, O.E. Kearns, T.H. Kearns, their father, H.C. Kearns, W.H. Ragan and A.J. Owen.



J. E. Thompson 1907-1910

Among young people in the church at that time appear the names of some of today's active and substantial leaders: Helen Brooks (Mrs. J.E. Millis), Marguerite Kirkman (Mrs. Forrest H. Murray), Lily and Debbie Sherrod (Mrs. W.L. Watson and Mrs.

W.R. Morrow), Maggie Davis (Mrs. J.W. Chandler), Misses Genevieve Moore and Bess Siceloff. Among the young men were: Bob and Charles Amos, Jim and Thurlow Kearns, Virgil Idol, Albion and Ed Millis, Fred and Charlie Ingram, and Fred Eshelman.

Mrs. Hancock recalled with pleasure the custom and Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Snider as with their seven boys and two little girls they filled an entire pew near the front of the church. It is significant that the second generation of Sniders still follow the same custom, though the families of this generation along with Mr. Snider now occupy almost three full pews.

Through the years the memory of her wedding is one of the precious memories of any woman's life. In the fall of 1914 Nancy Kearns, daughter of H.C. Kearns, of the family who have taken such a prominent part in



J. E. Gay 1900-1902

this church from about 1890 to the present time, was planning her marriage to J. Allen Austin, a most promising young attorney of High Point. At first the wedding was planned for December. But two things caused Nancy Kearns to change the date to October 28. A new



J. R. Scroggs 1897-1900

preacher was scheduled to be sent to the church at the November Conference, and the pastor in charge, Dr. J.H. Barnhardt was greatly beloved by both the young people – as, incidentally, he was by the whole congregation. They wanted him to perform the ceremony, and they wanted to be married in Washington Street Church, endeared to them by many memories over nearly twenty vears of attendance and membership.

So it came about that theirs was the last marriage performed in the old church. It was a lovely ceremony. Miss Florence Blair, a close friend of the family, was pianist, and the soloist was Miss Ella Lambeth (now Mrs. W.W. Rankin of Durham), sister of Rev. W.A. Lambeth, who later served Wesley Memorial Church twice as pastor.

Soon the time came when Washington Street Church gave way to a new and larger church on a new location. Again emotions were mixed; there was a sadness at leaving a beloved church home; there was joy over the advantages and opportunities for greater service in a wider field. Yet serious leaders warned that to whom much is given, from him much is required, and enjoined upon the members that in the larger and more expensive church that they keep first in their minds to worship God in the spirit of humility, and to make their new church home a house of prayer and friendship to all people.



Chapter 5 Building Wesley Memorial Church on Main Street

During the pastorate of T.F.Marr (1905-1907) the first mention of the need for a new church occurred, but it was not until the time of Dr. J.H. Barnhardt (1910-1914) that a decision was reached to erect a new church. That it was under serious consideration during the pastorate of Rev. J.E. Thompson (1907-1910) is revealed by a recollection of his daughter. Mrs. Hancock recalls that when the present lot on North Main Street was being considered, many in the congregation were opposed to moving as far away. "Why in the world does anyone want to put a church that far out of town? Nobody wants to go to Winston to church every Sunday."

For the history of the building of Wesley Memorial Church on North Main Street, the church owes a great debt to the late Julius W. Harriss, father of J. Welch Harriss, who has had such an important part in the building of the new church on Chestnut Street, and his sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Harriss Covington, active worker and generous giver. His grandson, J. Harriss Covington is one of the important young leaders of the church.

Mr. Harriss was chairman of the Building Committee and chairman of the Board of Stewards during the years of planning the church. He prepared a paper on the building of the church and read this paper at the evening service of March 26, 1916, the day the cornerstone was laid. A copy of this paper was placed in the copper box enclosed in an aperture in the wall behind the cornerstone, bearing the inscription: Wesley Memorial M.E. Church, South, Founded 1856 - Erected 1914. Much of the information included in this chapter is derived from Mr. Harriss' paper. At a stewards meeting on the second Tuesday night of March 1913, a building committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. Barnhardt, W.G. Bradshaw, J.W. Harriss, J.H. Adams, F.N. Tate, H.W. Fraser, J.E. Marsh, Dr. Dred Peacocok, O.E. Kearns, W.H. Ragan, V.A.J. Idol, and A. Sherrod. This committee was confirmed by the Quarterly Conference meeting on April 1, 1913.

The committee met on March 20, 1913, and the following officers were elected: W.G. Bradshaw, Chairman; Dr. Barnhardt, Vice-Chairman; V.A.J. Idol, Secretary; and Dr. Peacock, Treasurer. The chairman appointed an executive committee to superintend the construction of the new building: F.N. Tate, A. Sherrod, and J.E. Marsh. A finance committee consisting of Dr. Peacock and J.W. Harriss was appointed. The treasurer was required to give indemnity bond in the sum of \$10,000 for faithful performance of his duties; and an auditing committee to audit the books of the treasurer each month consisted of J.W. Harriss. O.E. Kearns, and V.A.J. Idol.

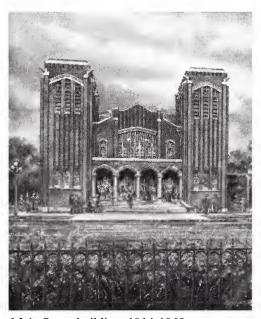
On June 23, 1911, two years before the building committee was appointed, a site on North Main Street, 116 feet front and 200 feet deep had been bought at a cost of \$10,000; five thousand dollars had already been paid, and now the building committee at once paid off the remaining \$5,000, leaving the site free of any encumbrances.

On the fourth Sunday in February 1913 at the eleven o'clock service, subscriptions were taken for the new building. At this service \$36,000 was pledged. Immediately a committee was appointed to canvass members not present. Within a week \$19,000 had been raised, making a total of \$55,000. Subscriptions were to be paid in sixty monthly installments. Now there was in hand a site free from debt and pledges and cash amounting to \$55,000.

Nine months later, on January 1, 1914, the work of collecting pledges was turned over to the Ladies Aid Society and the Church Improvement Circle. The following women were appointed to make the monthly collections: Mrs. O.E. Kearns, Mrs. J.W. Harriss, Mrs. J.E. Marsh, Mrs. B.W. Moore, Mrs. J.E. Kirkman, Mrs. L.J. Ingram. Mrs. A. Sherrod, Mrs. A.J. Owen, and Miss Pattie Newlin. At the end of the third year they had collected more than \$25,000.

Though relieved of collecting, the building committee found that the work was demanding constant attention, and to this they gave themselves without reserve, often neglecting their private business. However, the committee gave much credit for the successful launching of the campaign to the earnest and tactful leadership of the pastor, Dr. Barnhardt. He enabled the congregation to see the need of a new church and to realize their ability to build it.

On April 1, 1913 the building committee met and elected Hook and Rogers of Charlotte as architects. The company later submitted plans which were accepted. At a meeting of the building committee on July 21, 1913, sealed



Main Street building, 1914-1960

bids for construction were opened and the following contracts awarded:

High Point
\$41,292.59
Iardy Payne,
\$2,240.80
Co. Charlotte
\$ 287.00
rn Supply
\$ 68.17
, Manville Co.
\$ 599.22
ensboro
\$ 1,775.00
\$ 3,706.23
\$ 2,044.73
\$ <u>2,009.49</u>
\$ 54,723.31

Ground was broken for the building on September 1, 1913, and the work was vigorously pushed forward until December 1, 1913. Very bad weather set in: it snowed heavily and frequently; so that the ground was not entirely clear until late in February. Work had to be suspended. Mr. Connor remembers that the walls had reached to the windows when work had to stop until March 1, 1914. From then on there was no further hold-up till the work was completed.

At a meeting of the building committee on March 27, 1914, Dr. Bradshaw resigned as a member of committee on account of failing health. By unanimous vote, J.W. Harriss was elected in his place as chairman of the committee.

As early as 1906, Rev. T.F. Marr had recognized the need for a pipe organ in the church and had organized a "Church Improvement Circle" for the main purpose of starting a fund for the purchase of one. He

appointed Mrs. E.D. Steele, one of the most zealous workers in the church, as leader, and Mrs. George H. Crowell, a music teacher and wife of the superintendent of schools, as treasurer. Mrs. Crowell served for two years, then resigned and Miss Pattie Newlin succeeded her. In a short time the society made its first deposit in the bank of \$44.65 which was the beginning of the organ fund.

This society continued to function until it was consolidated with the Ladies Aid Society.

Now, eight years later, at the meeting of the church building committee on March 24, 1914, the matter of the organ was again brought up, and a committee was appointed to work with a committee from the Ladies Aid Society and the Church Improvement Circle looking toward the purchase of the organ. V.A.J. Idol was named chairman, and to work with him were J.H. Adams and O.E. Kearns. The committee of women consisted of Mrs. E.D. Steele, Mrs. Grace Kephart, a leading soprano in the choir, and Mrs. A.J. Owen.

This committee spent considerable time investigating different makes of organs in churches in other towns. The First Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem had recently installed an Austin organ which had been declared by musicians – organists and singers – who had heard it and tried it, an exceptionally fine instrument. The committee visited the church, heard the organ, and shared the enthusiasm of the others who had heard it.

The Ladies Aid Society and the Church Improvement Circle had even then begun the work which they have continued through the years to earn the money to carry out their projects. Turnip green dinners in the spring, bazaars, flower shows, and turkey dinners in the fall, ice-cream suppers, fried chicken dinners, oyster stews — what long hard hours of work and how many hundreds of meals they served — but they achieved their aims.

Therefore they now bought an Austin organ at a cost of \$4,750, and were able to pay \$3,200 cash toward the price of the organ. They gave one note for a year of \$750 and one for two years for \$300. Both were paid on time.

Another contribution which the women of the two organizations made to the new church was the carpet at a cost of \$700, for which they paid cash when it was delivered. They also furnished the kitchen, dining room, and ladies' parlor for which they paid \$200 cash.

In writing of what the women had done, Mrs. Harriss said "Too much praise cannot be given to these ladies to whose untiring efforts is largely due the building of the new church, as the congregation had to build a new church to take care of the organ."

On Sunday, March 29, 1914 at the eleven o'clock service all members were requested to express by written ballot their choice of a name for the new church. Because of the change of location, the name "Washington Street Church" could no longer be used. The names voted on were "Wesley Memorial", "First Church", "Central", Washington" and "St. Paul's". "Wesley Memorial" received a great many more votes than any of the others, so "Wesley Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South" became the new name of the new church.

Many found it difficult to give up the old name, just as the members had grieved at giving up the old first brick church, and had been sad at parting with the old brick church which had been their first church home. For a quarter of a century the congregation had worshipped in Washington Street Church, and it held many sacred memories for many of the them. Many had been married there; many had been baptized at its altar and had had their children baptized there; for many the memories were sad as they recalled the burial service read for loved ones from its

pulpit; for some it had meant the beginning of a new life, as they accepted Christ at its altar.

However, all recognized that the building was inadequate for the needs of the congregation and the growing community. The lot on Washington Street was too small to build a larger church – in every way it seemed best to move to the Main Street site, which was larger and "a little more centrally located."

On January 1, 1915, sixteen months after the work of building was begun, the church was completed and turned over to the building committee by the architects and contractors, and was formally accepted. The total cost, including the lot, the organ, and other incidentals amounted to \$71,408.31.

The first meeting of any kind in the new church was a wedding. Maggie Davis, daughter of W.H. Davis, of the Davis-Connor firm of contractors who built the church, was married at eight o'clock in the evening on December 15, 1914, to J. Walter Chandler of High Point.

Though the church was not yet entirely completed the floors were laid and the pews could be set in temporarily. They had to be taken out after the wedding so that the carpet could be laid before they were permanently placed and the congregation moved in. Windows were not placed, but canvas was fitted over the openings to keep out the wintry cold. The heating plant had been installed and was operating, so the building was comfortable.

It was well that heating was adequate, for the day had been a wintry one. An ice storm had prevailed during the early morning, and though the sun had come out late in the day, and there was no ice on the ground, the trees were still ice-covered.

Six hundred invitations had been issued, and apparently all the invited guests and many

uninvited tried to get into the new church. Police officers had to be called to control the crowds.

Inside the church, however, all was peaceful and in order. The altar had been beautifully decorated by Mrs. O.E. Kearns, Mrs. E.D. Steele and Miss Venetia Smith. "Miss Venetia" was the leading milliner in town, and for many years president of the Ladies Aid Society. The women had used many candles and quantities of pink carnations against the green of ferns from their own green-houses.

The organ had been installed and was used for the first time. The wedding music consisted of a solo by Mrs. Grace Kephart, a soprano soloist in the church choir, and a duet by Mr. and Mrs. J. Gurney Briggs. Dr. G.T. Rowe, the new pastor, performed the ceremony.

The first preaching service was held in the church on the second Sunday in January 1915, with Dr. Rowe in charge. Dr. Barnhardt, who had worked so actively in the building of the church in the last years of his pastorate, preached the first sermon at the eleven o'clock service, and Rev. J.E. Thompson, pastor from 1907-1910, preached the evening service.

For some reason that is not clear, the cornerstone of the church was not laid until March 26, 1916; the church was dedicated on March 9, 1919. Bishop U.V.W. Darlington preached at the eleven o'clock hour, and after the sermon officially dedicated the building. All stewards with the Sunday School superintendent, V.A.J. Idol, sat in a body on the north side of the church. At seven-thirty p.m., a thanksgiving service, over which the pastor Dr. Rowe presided, was held. Former pastors, Dr. Barnhardt, Rev. J.E. Thompson, and Rev. T.F. Marr, and Presiding Elder, Rev. W.R. Ware, were present.

In concluding his account of the building of the church, written in March, 1916, Mr. Harriss wrote:

"Now the congregation has made wonderful progress under the leadership of the faithful and beloved pastor, G.T. Rowe. During this time the Sunday School and congregation have enjoyed this commodious and elegant building. We are beginning to feel at home; associations begin to gather about it . . . Already this is a holy place. The large, elegant church has not produced coldness and formality in our worship. Stately tones of the pipe organ are not inconsistent with simple humble devotion. Pride does not drive the timid away; all who come are made to feel at home."

Mr. Charles S. Welborn, one of our honored octogenarians, for many years secretary of the Sunday School, now secretary-emeritus, recalls a statement made by Dr. J.H. Weaver, Presiding Elder, at the first quarterly conference after the removal into the new church: "Now you have a beautiful new church. See that you make it a friendly church."





The Main Street building, 1914-1960, after the south church tower was raised 27 feet to accommodate the chimes in 1920.

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Chapter 6 Laying the Cornerstone of Main Street Wesley Memorial

The officers of the Western North Carolina Conference in 1916 were: Bishop, Dr. John Kilgo; Presiding Elder, J.H. Weaver; Pastor in charge at Wesley Memorial Church, G.T. Rowe.



Gilbert T. Rowe 1912-1918

The Annual Conference had changed the name of this charge from Washington Street to Wesley Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South. On the same day a bronze tablet bearing the name and date of erection was placed on the front of the building.

In the High Point Enterprise for Thursday afternoon, March 23, 1916, appeared this item: "A unique ceremony will be held on Sunday morning. Though a year old, deposits in the cornerstone of Wesley Memorial Church will be made. Bishop Kilgo will speak.

Next Sunday Wesley Memorial Church will have the unusual experience of seeing the contents of the cornerstone deposited one year after the building was completed. The church was occupied on January 10 of last year, since when it has been the home of the Washington Street congregation. . . . The original plan was to place the cornerstone soon after the foundation was laid, but continued bad weather caused a delay till after the walls were completed. Hence, the tablet will be removed and a copper box, containing articles usually placed in a cornerstone will be deposited in an excavation back of it. Bishop Kilgo is to preach on Sunday at 11:00 A.M. and to conduct the ceremony. After the

sermon the congregation will pass out to the front of the building where they will take part in the exercises."

In the North Carolina Christian Advocate for Thursday, March 23, 1916, published in Greensboro, N.C. in an article written by Dr. Rowe, occurred this sentence about Wesley Memorial Church: "On January 10, 1915, the Washington Street congregation entered the newly completed building (Wesley Memorial Church) for the first services."

And in the same paper was another short item announcing the exercise for Sunday, March 26: "The church has been occupied for more than a year, but for some reason the cornerstone laying has been delayed."

So it is not possible to throw any further light on a subject which has caused much discussion why the delay of more than two years after the walls were in the process of structure before the box was placed in the aperture reserved for it, and the cornerstone placed before it with proper ceremonies.

Mr. Connor, of Connor and Davis, contractors, states that he remembers clearly placing the stone in place, but he has no explanation for the delay.

Because it was felt that valuable historical information could be made available through the contents of the box enclosed by the cornerstone, the Official Board and the Board of Trustees of the church agreed to have the box opened at the close of the morning worship service on May 1, 1960.

An effort was made to have those members of the present congregation who were members approximately forty-four years ago, when the box was sealed, to sit together near the front of the north side of the sanctuary. The pastor, Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr., led a brief devotional service, after which Mr. Charles McAnally,

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, opened the copper box and named and held up the articles for all to see. Mr. W.B. Hall and Mrs. Emily Crowe listed the articles as they were removed.

For several weeks the box was kept in the church office where any member who chose might examine its contents.

Much of the history of the past years of the church was revealed in the various documents, and from the lists of names and the activities of the church members many tender ties and sacred associations were brought to mind.

Here follows a list of the articles in the box in the order in which they had been placed in the box:

- 1. A Methodist Hymnal, Pub. By Methodist Publishing Co., Nashville, 1914. An inscription in the hymnal reads: The contents of this box were prepared and presented by the members of the Board of Stewards.
- 2. Discipline of the Church: 1914 ed. By Gross Alexander. The Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.
- California Sketches by O.P. Fitzgerald, Methodist Publishing Co., Nashville, 1890. Inscription: This book was taken from the library of the old Washington Street Church. A photograph of Washington Street Church, 1906, was enclosed.
- 4. Holy Bible: King James or Authorized version. The Standard Bible of America and the World Published Jas. Fott and Co. N.Y.C., Cambridge ed. No date. On the flyleaf of the Bible were the signatures of Bishop John C. Kilgo and the Pastor, G.T. Rowe.

Following their signatures were the signatures of the Stewards:

J. H. Adams	Fred N. Tate			
C.H. Siceloff	W.W. Snider			
H.A. Millis	Robert T. Amos			
W.H. Ragan	A.H. Sisson			
W.C. Beavens	J.W. Harriss			
George A. Matton	R.C. Lindsay			
J.D. Mann	W.T. Williams			
George Wood	A.B. Horney			
John S. Welborn	Frank Gurley			
Charles S. Welborn J.E. Marsh				
Dred Peacock	A. Sherrod			

J.E. Kirkman

G.H. Kearns

W.D. Brooks

Charles F. Long

There were also the following quotations written on an end page: Matt.6:33

A.J. Owen

L.E. Sinclair

H.W. Fraser

R.H. Sechrest

"Religion is the fundamental fact in human nature."

"Out of the religious qualities come all the permanent deeds of mankind."

"The Kingdom of God is the final form of enduring society."

- High Point Enterprise, Vol. 23, No. 207, Thursday afternoon, March 23, 1916 "Morning ed. W.H. Keener, Bus. Manager J.P Rawley
- 6. Christian Advocate, March 17, 1916, General Organ of M.E. Church, South (no allusion to Wesley Memorial Church)
- North Carolina Christian Advocate:
 Greensboro, N.C. Thursday, March 23,
 1916. Organ of Western North Carolina
 Conference, M.E. Church, South
 (Allusions to Wesley Memorial noted above)
- 8. List of Officers of the Greensboro
 District of Western N.C. Conference and
 of Wesley Memorial Church, March 26,
 1916

Bishop: John C. Kilgo

Presiding Elder: James H. Weaver

Pastor in Charge: G.T. Rowe

Stewards: Chairman: J.W. Harriss Secretary and Treasurer: Frank Gurley, J.H. Adams, C.E. Siceloff, H.A. Millis, W.H. Ragan, W.C. Beavans, George A. Matton, J.D. Mann, George Wood, John S. Welborn, Chas. S. Welborn, Dred

Peacock, J.E. Kirkman, G.H.

Kearns, W.D. Brooks, O.E. Kearns, Chas. F. Long, Fred N. Tate, W.W.

Snider, Robert T. Amos, A.H.

Sisson, J.W. Harriss, R.O. Lindsay, W.T. Williams, A.B. Horney, Frank

Gurley, J.E. Marsh, A. Sherrod, A.J. Owen, L.C. Sinclair, H.W. Fraser,

R.H. Secrest

Church Leader: R.O. Lindsay

Trustees: Chairman: J.H. Johnson, W.H. Ragan, H.W. Fraser, A. Sherrod, Dred Peacock, J.E. Marsh, J.W. Harriss

Building Committee: Chairman, J.W. Harriss

Secretary: V.A.J. Idol

Treasurer: Dr. Peacock, F.N.Tate, J.E. Marsh, J.W. Harriss, J.H. Adams, Dred Peacock, A. Sherrod, O.E. Kearns, W.H. Ragan, V.A.J. Idol, H.W. Fraser

Sunday School Superintendent:

V.A. J. Idol; secretary and treasurer: B.C. Harmon; assistant secretaries and treasurers: Earl Steed, A.B. Horney, Ed Gurley, N.E. Allred.

Sunday School Teachers: C.E.

Siceloff, J.A. Eshelman, Mrs. H.W. McCain, Miss Rosa Sutherland, Miss Lucille Goldston, W.M. Marr, Mrs. J.J. Farriss, Charles Gueth, Mrs. J.F. Hayden, Miss Vera Idol, Mrs. Grace Kephart, W.T. Kirkman, J.E. Millis, Dred Peacock, Thornwell Haynes, J. Allen Austin.

Superintendent Cradle Roll:

Miss Pattie Newlin

Superintendent Primary Dept.: Mrs. A.J. Owen; asst. Mrs. J. Allen Austin Intermediate Superintendent: W.M.

Marr; Teachers: Mrs. H.W. McCain, Miss Lillian Hunt, Miss Vera Idol.

Epworth League: President, Samuel Davis; vice-president, Ruth Owen; Secretary, Odelle Peacock; treasurer, Neal Edwards; pianist, Mae Kirkman.

Junior League: Manager: Mrs. G.T. Rowe; president, James Farriss; vicepresident. Janie Redding; secretary, Wayne Sullivan; treasurer, Neal Williams.

Woman's Missionary Society:

President, Mrs. A.J. Owen; 1st vice-president, Mrs. M.R. Lynch; 2nd vice-president, Mrs. D.A. Stanton; recording secretary, Mrs. W.S. O'Neal; corresponding secretary, Mrs. H.C. Pitts; treasurer, Mrs. G.A. Matton; superintendent publicity and social service, Mrs. B.E. Moore; superintendent supplies, Mrs. Charles Ragan.

Young Woman's Missionary Society:

President, Mrs. J.V. Wilson; 1st vicepresidents, Mrs. J.E. Marsh and Mrs. G.T. Rowe; 2nd vice-president, Mrs. John Siceloff; superintendent publicity, Mrs. F.P. Ingram; superintendent social service, Mrs. J.W. McCain; treasurer, Mrs. W.T. Williams; assistant treasurer, Mrs. R.L. Phillips; corresesponding secretary, Mrs. George T. Wood; recording secretary, Mrs. J.S. Eshelman; superintendent supplies, Mrs. Charles Ragan.

Daisy Davies Missionary Society:

President, Mrs. J.W. Millis; vicepresident, Lillian Hunt; secretary, Bessie Pitts; treasurer, Mrs. W.R. Morrow; superintendent social service, Mrs. Glenn Lazenby.

Young People's Missionary Society:

President, Mellie Muse; 1st vicepresident, Maude Owen; 2nd vicepresident, Susie Kirkman; recording secretary, Elizabeth Harriss; corresponding secretary, Gladys Kirkman; superintendent supplies, Louise Ingram; superintendent social service, Clara Steele.

- Junior Missionary Society: President, Ruth Owen; 1st vice-president, Edith Armentrout; 2nd vice-president, Elizabeth Green; treasurer Odelle Peacock; recording secretary, Faye Womble; superintendent publicity, Jo Wood; superintendent social service, Elizabeth Strickland; corresponding secretary, Mary Ring.
- Ladies Aid Society: President, Miss Venetia Smith; treasurer, Mrs. C.A. Ring; secretary, Mrs. W.H. Townsend.

- A list of the entire membership of the church followed the above list. The total number of members was 930.
- 9. Journal of the 26th session of the Western North Carolina Conference M.E. Church, South, 1915, Reidsville.
- 10. A Brief Sketch of the History of Methodism in High Point by Dr. Dred Peacock. (This paper was read by Dr. Peacock at the evening service March 26, 1916).
- 11. An Account of the Building of Wesley
 Memorial Church by J.W. Harriss,
 Chairman of the Building Committee
 and Chairman of the Board of Stewards.
 (This account was also read at the
 evening service by Mr. Harris)



Chapter 7 The Chimes

Through the years the Ladies Aid Society of the church constantly moved from one completed task to begin work on another. No sooner was the new church building completed, the organ installed and paid for, the carpet laid, and other furnishings set up, than the women set their sights on another big project, that of securing chimes for the new church.

In the church bulletin for January 25, 1920, appeared the following item: "The members of the Ladies Aid Society have set their hearts on securing a certain sum, not yet subscribed, for the purchase of a set of chimes for our church. If you have not already made your subscription, members of the soliciting committee (Mrs. O.H. Kearns, Mrs. W.D. Brooks, and Miss Zillah Smith), greatly desiring that no subscription be taken at the church, would welcome your name and a definite amount, however large or small, upon their lists."

Making it evident that the ladies meant business, and were not letting grass grow under their feet, it was reported on March 7, 1920, that Christ Episcopal Church in Baltimore had a chime of thirteen bells in a tower – beautiful and satisfying. "It may be that our chimes committee may decide to buy identical chimes," the bulletin concluded.

Only one week later, on Monday afternoon, March 14, the Ladies Aid met at 3:30 with Mrs. W.H. Ragan on Lindsay Street with Mrs. O.P. Moffitt, Mrs. S.F. Wall, Mrs. J.V. Wilson, Mrs. C.L. Wheeler, Mrs. C.A. Ring, and Mrs. B.C. Harmon, as associate hostesses. Mrs. J.F. Hayden, president, presided. The most important business of the afternoon was the submitting of a contract with McShane Bell Foundry Company in Baltimore, Maryland for a set of 13 bells.

The contract agreed: That this chime is to be an exact duplicate of those in Christ Church in Baltimore and the Church of Our Saviour in Philadelphia. The bells are guaranteed free from flaws and against crackage by regular usage for 25 years from the date of installation. If either, or all bells, should crack by regular usage, the same will be replaced with new bell, or bells, of identical weight, tone, and quality. Suitable memorials or other subscriptions will be cast in relief on either or all of the bells.

The bells will be suspended in the belfry of the tower in a frame of strong Georgia pine timber....each bell to be stationary. The playing will be done by a hand lever chiming console of quarter oak...levers specifying the notes corresponding to the tones of the bells.

The chime is to be placed in the testing tower with the party of the first part privileged to inspect the same. If not satisfactory, this contract is cancelled; otherwise the shipment will be made and the chime installed. A further test will be allowed for attunement, tone quality, timber, etc. If the chime cannot be heard under favorable conditions as much as one mile in all directions, the agreement is cancelled.

The installation will be made within approximately four months from this date. It may be possible to have them by the middle of June. Our expert chimer will be sent to dedicate the chimes. One thousand programs will be supplied, along with a book of 100 suitable tunes, and a future chimer will be instructed.

Signing this contract: Ladies Aid Society Mrs. J.F. Hayden, President Mrs. Oscar Kearns, Chairman W.A. Lambeth, Pastor The McShane Bell Foundry Spencer W. Seery, Sec.

Witnesses:
Mrs. W.D. Brooks
Robert E. Self

In order to place the chimes, the south church tower had to be raised 27 feet. Mrs. Hayden reported that contractor H.C. Conner of Davis-Connor, who built the church, believed that he could have the tower completed and ready for the reception of the bells by July.

On June 20, 1920 Mrs. Hayden reported that Mr. John T. Matey will come from the factory to install the bells, and thinks he can have them ready for dedication by July 18.

Another note of this same date stated that the McShane Co. tested our chime of 13 bells on Tuesday, June 15, in Baltimore in the presence of celebrated musicians. Among them were Mr. R.L. Roy, "best violinist in North Carolina"; Mr. Claude Robeson, celebrated pipe-organ player of Washington, D.C.; and Mr. Richard Johnston, official chimer in Metropolitan Church in Washington (President McKinley's Church). All were pleased and pronounced them "sweeter and richer in tone than any they had heard before."

It was stated that the bells were being polished and made ready for shipment. However, an embargo against freight delayed shipment, and they were not ready for dedication until July 18.

The cost of the thirteen bells amounted to \$1,100.00, and of raising the tower \$4,800.00, making a total of \$5,900.00. The Ladies Aid Society had collected \$10,000.75 made in subscriptions from one dollar to \$300.00

Before July 18, the complete cost of the bells was paid to the McShane Co., and Mr. J.H. Mallard, representing the company stated: "The money was placed in my hands by W.A. Lambeth, pastor of Wesley Memorial Church, High Point, N.C."

The dedication ceremony began with a concert on Saturday evening, July 17, from 7:30 to 8:00. The chimer was Mr. W.H. Matter of Christ Church in Baltimore. The first hymn played on the chime was "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Ten other hymns followed, and the concert ended with the Westminster Peal. Other programs of hymns and sacred music were played on Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening; a patriotic program on Monday at noon; and on Monday evening a program of old songs and music, including the Lohengrin and Mendelssohn wedding marches, and concluding with "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

The dedication service was held at the eleven o'clock service on Sunday morning. Bishop Collins Denny of Richmond, Va., preached and conducted the dedicatory service.

The Reverend W.A.
Lambeth, pastor, had
requested the ushers to
reserve the two front
pews on each side of the
church for members of
the Ladies Aid Society.
At the close of Bishop
Denny's sermon, the



William A. Lambeth 1918-1922, 1933-1936

ladies formed two rows about the altar, and Mrs. Hayden, president, presented the bells to Bishop Denny. As a part of the dedicatory service the Doxology and other hymns were played by the bells.

Recent pastors were invited to be present. Dr. Barnhardt was unable to be present in the morning, but was present and took part in the evening service, when Bishop Denny again preached.

Mr. J.F. Hayden was the first chimer.

Beginning at the end of the first week for several years, Mr. Hayden climbed a steep ladder into the tower room to play the chime before every service, wedding and funeral. He transposed music for the chime, and many successors have played from his hand-written notes.

In 1925, Mr. J. Gurney Briggs moved to High Point, and in addition to directing the choir, he took over from Mr. Hayden the duty as chimer. He also played in the tower until the electric key board system was installed in the choir loft. On January 9, 1927, Mrs. Bascom Whitaker, church organist, began to play the chimes from the electric key board.

In the tower the bells were sounded from a lever stand, or console, placed in a room in the tower below the belfry. The levers of the playing stand were connected with the clappers of the bells by a series of chains and wooden rods. The principle of operation was similar to playing a piano. The note of each bell was on the lever, which was pressed down with a quick downstroke of the handle.

The chime is in the key of "D" and consists of 13 bells comprising the complete octave in the keys of D and G. The weight of the bells ranges from the first, 3050 pounds, to the thirteenth weighing 300 pounds, making a total of 14,150 pounds. With the frame the total weight is about 20,000 pounds.

Upon each bell is an inscription cast in relief, and the inscriptions are so meaningful that they should never be lost sight of.

On the first, the largest, bell are the words:

Put God First

This chime of thirteen bells
Was secured in 1920 for
Wesley Memorial Methodist
Episcopal Church
through the efforts of the
Ladies Aid Society
These bells are dedicated to
the worship of God
And the service of man.

Second Bell:

This bell is dedicated to our beloved pastor, Rev. W.A. Lambeth

Third Bell:

O come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. David

Fourth Bell:

Where the voice of the preacher does not reach.

The sound of the bells awakens memories and ministers comfort.

Fifth Bell:

Come, ye that love the Lord. Isaac Watts

Sixth Bell:

And other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also. Jesus

Seventh Bell:

Whosoever will. John

Eighth Bell:

In the hour of trial, Jesus plead for me. Lost by base denial, I depart from thee. James Montgomery

Ninth Bell:

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.

Jesus

Tenth Bell:

Suffer the little children to come unto me.

Jesus

Eleventh Bell:

My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee, I sing. Samuel F. Smith

Twelfth Bell:

Ring out the old, ring in the new; Ring out the false, ring in the true. Tennyson

Thirteenth Bell:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;
The Lord make his face to shine upon thee,
And be gracious unto thee;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,
And give thee peace. Moses

It is significant that Dr. Lambeth knew nothing of the dedication of a bell to him until he went up to Baltimore for the testing of the bells. The tribute moved him greatly, and was richly deserved. For from the beginning of his pastorate in 1918 until the chime was installed in 1920, he had worked unceasingly to help the women bring their project to a successful culmination, and no one was happier than he when the bells were in place and paid for, and "Praise God from Whom all Blessings flow" rang out over the town from the tower of his pastoral charge, Wesley Memorial Church.

The chime has continued to be a sacred part of many of the church services. A significant and happy use was inaugurated when Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr. became pastor in 1957.

On Sunday mornings at 10:40 the chimes are played to welcome new babies into the homes of members of the church.

It is interesting that many descendants of pioneer Methodist are being born into the congregation, who should be given special mention. For example, on July 10, 1960 the chimes were played to welcome Jayne Frances Peacock daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Peacock, Jr., who was born on June 23. Jayne Frances is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Peacock and greatgranddaughter of Dr. and Mrs. Dred Peacock, who joined Washington Street Church in 1906, during the pastorate of Rev. T.F. Marr. On July 12, Amos Ragan Kearns, III continued the history of another of the families who have taken such an active part in the history of the church. This newcomer is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Amos. R. Kearns and great-grandson and Mr. and Mr. G.H. Kearns. Mr. Amos Kearns has been a leader in building the new church, and his father, Mr. Gurney Kearns, has been a member of the church for nearly seventyfive years. Every Sunday finds him and Mrs. Kearns in their regular pew. The church has had no more loyal and faithful members than the Kearns family, and "Mr. Gurney" continues to give generously of his means and to support the church with enthusiasm.



Chapter 8 The New Religious Education Building

In 1888 to 1890 when Washington Street Church was built, and the congregation moved out of the one-room building to the larger structure, there were 125 members of the Sunday School. With larger facilities in the new church and with the constantly growing population of High Point, the membership of the church and Sunday School had increased proportionately.

In the Washington Street Church there were no separate rooms for adults and young people's classes. The small children met in the room separated from the church by the rolling partition, but there were no rooms to separate kindergarten from primary and junior departments.

In 1915, when the congregation moved into Wesley Memorial Church, the membership of the Sunday School had grown to about 250. Though classrooms and an assembly room were included in the new church, it was recognized almost immediately that the time would come very soon when more adequate space would be needed. At first, opening exercises were held in the assembly room: afterward sliding doors were rolled down on each side to provide rooms for the Baraca and Philathea classes. The other classes met in small classrooms opening off the rear of the assembly hall.

In 1925, Dr. E.K. McLarty was pastor of the church, and Belvin C. Harmon was superintendent of the Sunday School. For over a year the Board of Stewards had discussed the urgent needs of the Sunday School, recognizing that it had completely outgrown its present facilities. Therefore, at a meeting of the Board on February 11, 1924 the Board came to a unanimous decision to erect at once a new Sunday School building to cost from \$75,000 to \$100,000.

So early in 1925, Mr. Tate, Chairman of the Board of Stewards, set up a building committee to draw up plans, investigate contracts, and receive bids. The committee consisted of Mr. Tate, who was elected chairman, Dred Peacock, vice-chairman, J.H. Adams, C.L. Amos, W.D. Brooks, B.C. Marmon, V.A.J. Idol, O.E. Kearns, G.H. Kearns, J.E. Marsh, J. Ed Millis, A. Sherrod, and M.J. Wrenn.

The committee set to work immediately, and on June 21, 1925 presented sketches of a new building, which had been prepared by H.M. King, church architect from Louisville, Ky. The plans were examined by competent church and Sunday School workers, who suggested a few changes. With these changes the plans were approved, and the committee was instructed to proceed to receive bids.

The plans called for a building 130 ft. by 40 ft., including about 30 rooms. They provided for the removal of the Sunday School unit as originally built, with additional excavation which would provide for the entire ground floor to be used. On this floor the following provisions were made: a room for the Men's Bible Class; a room for the seniors; a large assembly hall with a stage; and a large kitchen with connecting serving rooms.

The first floor plan arranged for rooms for the cradle roll, the beginner's class, the primary class, and the Philathea classroom. A pastor's study was provided and an office for the secretary-treasurer. The plan called for making the current secretary's office into a Sunday School library and the present pastor's study into a room for the Sunday School superintendent, or for a future religious educational director.

The plans also called for a "roof-garden" or out-door assembly room reached by stairs from the second floor, with a serving-room served by a dumb-waiter from the kitchen. This room was particularly designed for summer entertainment. Space was provided for a basketball court. However, as events proved, much of the plan for the "roof-garden" and the entertainment area was curtailed.

It was felt that a full-time educational superintendent should be employed so that the young people could be organized into such activities as would create lively interest in the church and the various services sponsored by it. The average attendance of the Sunday School had now reached 500.

It was on August 10, 1926, more than a year later, during Dr. McLarty's last year as pastor, that the bids were accepted. The total cost of the building including interest to Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co., from which the money was borrowed, was \$50,000: to Hedrick, the contractor, \$32,000; heating, \$4,500; plumbing, \$2,160.

Pledges were taken to run for five years. The total pledges amounted to \$64,000 with 262 people making pledges. The building was built on a cash basis, thus enabling the church to take advantage of all discounts.

Dr. McLarty completed his four-year tenure as pastor in the fall of 1926, a few months before completion of the building, and the Annual Conference assigned the Rev. John W. Moore to Wesley Memorial Church. He arrived in High Point late in November and about a month later, on December 26, 1926, Sunday School was held for the first time in the new building.

Every member of the Sunday School, officers, teachers, and pupils of every class from adults to kindergarten were delighted with their new and spacious surroundings, and the whole church joined in the rejoicing over the larger space provided for this necessary and important adjunct to the church.

On February 12, 1927, the entire membership was invited to join in a "house warming" in the new building. Miss Edith Moore (Mrs. A. Sherrod) served as chairman of the committee on entertainment.

The entire indebtedness on the building was not discharged until 1935. The church had suffered along with everything else in the country during the terrible days of the depression in the early thirties. However, on October 2, 1938, the building was dedicated with Bishop Clare Purcell officiating.

By that time the enrollment in the Sunday School had reached 1183.

It was felt that the building was adequate to serve the church for many years; yet in less than twenty-five years the Sunday School had again outgrown those quarters and plans were begun for the larger and ampler buildings more suited to the present needs and times which are an important part of the new church to be moved into in 1960.



Chapter 9 Sunday School Through The Years

Sunday school must have developed along with the church itself from the very beginning, for in 1857 mention is made of the use of the new Methodist church building by different denominations, as one held Sunday school in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Two other allusions also give further evidence. In 1868, three women were appointed as a Sunday school committee: Aurelia Bowman, B. Clark, and Mary Campbell; and the church directory for 1887 announces Sunday school at 9:00 A.M.

In 1888 or 1890, when Washington Street Church was built the enrollment was 125 and it steadily increased. When the church was moved to Main Street in 1915 and became Wesley Memorial, the enrollment was approximately 759, not including the teachers and officers and was divided into 29 classes.

Of these 72 were enrolled in the cradle roll department with Miss Pattie Newlin as superintendent, and Mrs. G.T. Rowe was chairman of the primary department. In the adult group, 225 were in three Baraca groups listed as Junior Baracas, taught by Mr. J. Ed Millis; Baraca No. 1 taught by Prof. Thornwell Haynes, superintendent of the graded school; and Baraca No. 2, taught by Mr. J. Allen Austin. There were five in the Men's Bible Class, taught by Mr. W. T. Kirkman. Dr. Dred Peacock taught the Philathea class, numbering 105 members, and Miss Maggie Siceloff was in charge of the Home Department. That left approximately from 300 to 350 in the intermediate department.

Records of officers and teachers in the first years in Washington Street church are hard to trace. According to one of the honored octogenarians, W.W. Snider, whose memory goes far back into the past, one of the earliest superintendents of Washington Street Sunday School was Mr. Allen Sechrest, a brother of Mr. Joe Sechrest. It is known that Professor George H. Crowell came to High Point as first superintendent of the newly organized graded school in 1897, and soon thereafter became superintendent of the Sunday School following Mr. Sechrest. He served until 1907 when V.A.J. Idol was elected. Serving with him were: J.E. Marsh, assistant superintendent, and as secretaries were N.E. Allred, B.C. Harmon, A.B. Horney and Earl Steed. In 1918 Mr. Chas. S. Welborn became secretary, a position he is still holding as secretary-emeritus in 1960.

Several interesting events are in the records as having taken place during Mr. Idol's years of office.

As an incentive to attendance, pins and certificates were given. In the years from 1907 to 1912, Mr. W.G. Kirkman, father of Mrs. Gladys MacFarland and Mrs. Knox Wilson, had a record of five years of perfect attendance; for the first year he received a gold pin, the second year a wreath, and a gold bar for each succeeding year. This trophy is now one of Mrs. MacFarland's great treasures. She and her sister also received the pins.

In 1911, Miss Maggie Siceloff also received the gold cross and crown for perfect attendance, and a certificate of merit signed by V.A.J. Idol as superintendent of the Sunday school. Her sister, Miss Bess Siceloff, treasures these trophies.

In 1919 Mrs. W.R. Morrow was elected superintendent of the primary department, and in 1959 the Sunday School celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the occasion. There is no way of ever knowing the influence for Godly living which she has exerted on the hundreds of boys and girls who have passed through her department to become leading men and women in this church and in churches all over the world. She has seen the department grow from a small group of kindergarten and primary children to one hundred and twenty-five in the primary department alone.

Some of the people serving in the Sunday School in 1920 were: Mrs. Fred P. Ingram, supt. of the intermediate department; W.B. Hall, teacher of Junor Baraca; Miss Clara Boyd, the Grace Kephart class; Dr. Peacock, the Women's Bible class; Mrs. Farriss, the Susannah Wesley class; and working with Mrs. Morrow in the primary dept.; Misses Genevieve Moore, Fannie Matton, Pattie Newbin, Edna Wall, Claudia Lamb, and Mrs. J.V. Wilson, Mrs. Asa Briggs, and Mrs. L.C. Sinclair. W.M. Marr was supt. of the junior dept., with Mrs. Charles Holton and Misses Luna Saunders and Allie Strickland as teachers. Mrs. Alma McCain was a teacher in the intermediate dept.

On April 25, 1920 Virgil Idol resigned after having served as superintendent for thirteen years. The Sunday School presented to him a gold watch suitably engraved in appreciation for his long and faithful service. He still carries and treasures this watch, which after 40 years is an accurate time piece.

Belvin C. Harmon who had been serving as secretary and treasurer was elected in his place, and served until the early thirties.



John W. Moore 1926-1930

At this time W.M. Marr was superintendent of the junior and the intermediate department; Mr. F.N. Tate was teaching one of the junior Baraca classes and Mrs. J.J. Farriss (Now Mrs. R.K. Stewart) the Susannah Wesley class.

In 1923 Dr. Dred Peacock was still teaching the Women's Bible class. In this year the class held a meeting in his honor and as a token of love and appreciation gave him a gold watch. His son, John R. Peacock, uses this watch constantly and treasures it for the inscription it bears.

Soon after this time, Dr. Peacock began teaching the Baraca class and continued to teach the class for the rest of his life. The class became the Peacock class, and after his death in 1934 adopted the name Peacock Memorial class. Somewhat later the name was changed again to its present title, Peacock Bible class. This class has been one of the great forces in the church from its beginning. It began with a "hand full" of men, and now has a membership of around 186 members. The list of men, in addition to Dr. Peacock, who have been its teachers include dedicated and scholarly men. Among them have been: W.G. Bradshaw, S.L. Davis, Bruce Craven, J. Allen Austin, O. Arthur Kirkman, Mr. E.M. Avett, Dr. G.I. Humphreys and Dr. C. Excelle Rozzelle. Dr. H.H. Peterson, a returned missionary from Malaya and Director of Public Relations at High Point College, is present teacher.

On April 19, 1931 the class honored Dr. Peacock with a special program in celebration of his sixty-seventh birthday which was on April 12.

On June 2, 1934 memorial services of the Peacock Bible Class were held for Dr. Peacock who died earlier this year. A fund was established in his memory to be known as the "Dred Peacock Memorial Fund." It began with \$1,800.

Another meeting of this class of interest was the meeting held on January 23, 1957, honoring "Our Founder, Charter Members,

and those attending 20 years or more." At this time Dr. Rozzelle was teaching the class with Grady E. Whicker as assistant teacher. Charter members (over 50 years) present were G.H. Kearns, J.S. Welborn, J.W. Welborn, W.W. Snider, J.D. Adkins, and O.E. Kearns. Of this number still living at this time are G.H. Kearns, W.W. Snider and J.D. Adkins. There were eight present who had been members from 40 to 46 years; eighteen from 30 to 39 years; thirteen from 25 to 29 years; and twenty-seven from 20 to 24 years. Jack Peacock, his grandson, was recognized as an honored guest. The Woman's Wesley Class is another group that has had a distinguished record. After Dr. Peacock gave up this class about 1924, Mrs. C. Dunbar taught the class. Others who have taught with distinction have been Thornwell Haynes, W.M. Marr, T.W. Sprinkle, Mrs. B.E. Moore, Mrs. W.A. Bivens, Paul Moss, and in 1960 Harry Bell, the present teacher.

A third adult class is the Susannah Wesley Class composed of younger than those in the Woman's Wesley Class. Mrs. R.K. Stewart began teaching this class in Washington Street Church where the girls were of high school age or younger. When she gave up the class in 1924, Miss Vera Idol began to teach the class, and except for an interruption because of illness, continued to teach it until about 1947. Since that time Mrs. Harry Hendrick has been the regular teacher. During the time that Miss Idol was out in the middle 30's, O. Arthur Kirkman was the teacher.

As is true of the Woman's Wesley Class, this group of women has assumed positions of leadership, not only in Sunday School, but in many other areas of the church activities. Many of the teachers and officers from the primary all through other departments were formerly members of Susannah Wesley Class. An outstanding characteristic of Wesley Memorial Sunday School is the lively and active classes of adults and young people. Young people's classes that are very

important in the organization are the Junior and Senior High School groups, the College Class composed of High Point College students; the Young Adults; the Mr. and Mrs. Class; and the Adult Fellowship. In 1957 Mrs. H.R. Peterson organized a Women's Bible class composed of women who desire specific instruction in the Bible. This is proving a most profitable study.

Between these classes of adults and of the primary department, have been from the beginning most active departments of juniors and intermediates, taught by well-prepared and dedicated men and women. These are really the most important years in Sunday school, and it is of the utmost importance that these teachers can keep the children and young people interested in attending Sunday School. This requires strong personalities and real skill in teaching.

In January 1927, the Young People's department was organized with 28 young men and girls between the ages of 18 and 24 enrolled. Miss Clara Boyd and Mr. W.B. Hall were teachers of the two groups. In the same a year a Home Department was organized with the Rev. O.E. Cunningham, father of Mrs. J.W. McCain, as superintendent.

Promotion Day in 1926 provides an interesting look at some members of today as they were in the days when they moved up from beginners to the primary department. Some of the names have changed, but these boys and girls have become men and women active in the church today: Jane Austin, Harriss Covington, Dorothy Kirkman, Susan Sharp, Helen Betts, and Billie and Helen Marie Siceloff. Many other names are well known, but they are now living elsewhere.

Wesley Memorial Sunday school had always been interested in providing a library for its pupils and teachers. Many requests for books were made over the years. In July 1927, it is noted that the Ladies Aid Society donated books and money to the Sunday school library. It was increased soon to over 400 books, divided into two groups, for teachers and for pupils. In 1941 the church school library requested 200 or more books dealing with church school work. Again in 1952 Mr. Harry Bell, superintendent, asked for an increase in books for teachers and pupils. The late W.T. Powell had given shelves to hold the additional books. Mrs. Nancy K. Poston taught in the primary department for 10 years, and has been librarian since 1954. Now she is working very hard moving the books to the new church.

About 1932 Mr. Harmon resigned as superintendent and was succeeded by W.B. McEwen, who served until 1934 when W.B. Hall was elected. After serving five years until 1938, Mr. Hall was succeeded by J.A. Johnson, who was superintendent from 1938 to 1945, when the present superintendent, Harry Bell, was elected. Mr. Bell has served already for 15 years, which is longer than anyone who has held the position. He is a most efficient, conscientious and hardworking officer, and the Sunday school has grown in every way during these years. He looks forward to even greater growth in the more adequate quarters in the new church.

An office which takes its place along with that of superintendent and teachers in the successful operation of any Sunday school is that of secretaries, and Wesley Memorial Church has been singularly fortunate in the men who have held these positions. It is not possible for one man to handle all the details of this office, so more than one secretary serves.

When V.A.J. Idol was elected superintendent in 1907, B.C. Harmon was made secretary, with four assistants, Earl Steed, A.B. Horney, N.E. Allred and Ed Gurley. Of these Ed Gurley was still serving at the time of his death in 1959.

Another man who has made a notable record is Mr. Charles S. Welborn. Mr. Welborn, in point of years, is one of the oldest members in the congregation – he will be 88 years old in October – but in mental alertness and physical agility few men his age can equal him. He joined Washington Street Church in 1896, and remembers the facts of those early years with a clarity that is remarkable. His mind is a storehouse of reminiscences of people and places and dates. He was elected a secretary in 1918, and in 1960, he is still serving – a period of 42 years. In 1951 Mr. Welborn was honored by having the Sunday School name him secretary emeritus.

Another man who, though he has not lived as many years as Mr. Welborn, is not far behind him in faithful service, is O. Delk Smith. Delk was elected a secretary in 1922, and served until June 30, 1960. He resigned as of that date, and Charles Gueth, Jr., who has proved his worth in other capacities in the church, succeeded him on July 1.

Many other teachers and officers have served the Sunday school with invaluable zeal and consecration. They deserve mention by name. Only lack of space offers any reason for the omission.

One man in the church must be mentioned because of his unique record. Mr. N.E. Allred attended Sunday school at Washington Street and Wesley Memorial for 57 years without missing a single Sunday. Once during these years he took a trip to Europe. He was on shipboard on Sunday, and found that no Sunday school was scheduled. He had with him his Bible and Sunday School quarterly, so he gathered around him a small band of men and women, sang some hymns, led a prayer, and taught the Sunday school lesson for the day. Thus he kept his attendance record unbroken.

More and still more incidents of these rich years deserve to be recorded. But it is clearly seen that the Sunday school has been from the beginning one of the most alive and lively areas of the church. That is as it should be. It is said of old: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

A canvas of the members of Wesley Memorial members, or the members of any church, would unquestionably reveal that the vast majority attended Sunday school as children. It is the avenue by which most of our members admitted on confession of faith enter the church. Every Palm Sunday, after a period of intensive instruction on church membership, a class of children and young people are admitted to the church. In 1960, forty-six were received, the largest class on record.

Truly the Sunday school is the fountainhead of church membership.



Chapter 10 Women's Organizations

The records of the Women's Societies go back as far as the first church building. Though there is no recorded history of organized work during the first thirty years, from 1856 to 1888, certainly the women were not idle. Of the first "class" recorded when Rev. C.M. Anderson was pastor (1860-1861) of the seventeen members, ten were women; and in 1868, during the pastorate of Rev. J.D. Carpenter, the Sunday school committee consisted of three women.

On February 27, 1888, with the support of the Rev. E.H. Davis, in whose pastorate (1887-1890) Washington Street Church was built, the "Ladies Church Aid Society" was organized. Mrs. Oliver Causey was elected president; Mr. W.H. Ragan, vice president; Mrs. L.J. Ingram, secretary; and Miss Bettie Sapp (Mrs. J.E. Kirkman), treasurer. It was recalled by a historian of this period that Miss Bettie Sapp never announced a meeting of any kind that she did not preface or close her announcement with the words: "If God is willing."

At that time the church membership was around 200. In the first year, 1888-1889, there were 21 members in the society, and in 1889-1890 the number had increased to 37.

The first officers were elected for two years, and for the years 1890-1892, Mrs. Ragan was president; Mrs. E.D. Steele, vice president; Miss Mildred Stamey, secretary; and Mrs. W.G. Bradshaw, treasurer.

Among the others who served in the years from 1892-1929 were Mrs. D.A. Stanton, president (1895); Miss Florence Welch (Mrs. J.W. Harriss), secretary; and Miss Venetia Smith, Mrs. O.E. Kearns, and Mrs. J.F. Hayden, all of whom served as president.

There were six objectives set up in 1888 for the new society:

- 1. To look after the minor needs of the church.
- 2. To care for the parsonage.
- 3. To buy the pastor a new suit to wear to conference.
- 4. To visit new people in the community. (High Point's population now was about 2,000).
- 5. To minister to the sick in town.
- 6. To clothe needy children in the community.

Three standing committees were appointed: (1) the pastor's committee; (2) a visiting committee; and (3) an executive committee.

The dues were set up at five cents a month with a ten cent initiation fee. Meetings were held semi-monthly. At the first meeting eighty cents was paid into the treasury. At the end of 1889 the society had a balance of \$101.35.

From the beginning the Society sponsored activities to make money – strawberry festivals on the lot where the post office now stands; ice-cream suppers and oyster suppers in a warehouse on what is now N. Wrenn Street, and in a room over Mr. Jake Clinard's store on Main Street; bazaars, flower shows, and other devices too numerous to mention were held.

In June 1920, the Ladies Aid Society gave a garden party on Mrs. Steele's lawn with associate hostesses, Miss Venetia Smith, Miss Zillah Smith, Mrs. W.M. Tucker, Mrs. Arthur Allred, Mrs. Cora K. Reynolds, and Mrs. R.L. Pickett. Each member was asked to bring one dollar or more.

Two regular parties were held each year for many years – a Valentine party and a costume party on or near Washington's birthday, always with a silver offering at the door. In 1922 the Valentine party was held at

the home of Mrs. M.J. Wrenn, with every member fourteen years old or older invited; and the next year it was held at the home of Mrs. J.F. Hayden on Washington Street.

One of the most popular money-making events held every fall for many years was the flower show, bazaar, and turkey dinner, held first in a tobacco warehouse and later in the basement of the Sunday school building of Wesley Memorial Church. Throughout the year women worked hard making the many articles to be sold in the bazaar, and gorgeous chrysanthemums were tenderly covered to protect them from early frosts, and beautiful roses were carefully nurtured - all to be ready to display at the flower show in early November. The exhibition was an attraction to the whole town for the two days it continued, and on Friday evening, the flowers were sold. It became a tradition to expect the late R.R. Ragan to buy all the flowers that remained unsold. On Thursday night an "abundant and lavish" turkey dinner was served, the price 75 cents.

During many of the years Mrs. J.F. Hayden was president of the Ladies Aid, and Mrs. O.E. Kearns and Mrs. E.D. Steele were in charge of the kitchen. There have always been remarkable cooks among this congregation. It is recalled that the late Mrs. O.C. Durland handled tickets, and presided at the door with great charm and dignity. Mrs. A.J. Owen, Mrs. J.E. Kirkman, Miss Venetia Smith, Mrs. M.K. Shipplett, Mrs. Frank Gurley, and all the other women bore their share of the hard work before, after, and during the show. The flower shows have been discontinued, and the bazaar less emphasized, but the turkey dinner is still an important money making device of the women's societies.

In March the turnip green dinner early became an annual affair, and it too continues. An interesting coincidence was the discovery that the menu for the turnip green dinner in the 20's was identical with the one served in March 1960. The only difference was the price. For many years the price – 50 cents – never varied; in 1960 the price was \$1.00.

The Ladies Aid bought the organ and the chimes, carpeted the church, helped finance the educational building, bought furniture for the church and parsonage, gave money to the Children's Home, to needy students and churches – there is hardly an end to the projects which they financed or helped to finance.

The first missionary society was organized in 1900 when Rev. J.E. Gay was pastor. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gay were strong home missionaries. One winter afternoon around the little sheet iron stove in the living room of the parsonage on Washington Street, four women organized the first missionary society. Present were Mrs. J.E. Kirkman, Mrs. E.D. Steele, Mrs. D.A. Stanton, and Mrs. J.W. Harriss.

The dues for this society were set at 10 cents a month, with an extra 25 cents as a conference expense fund. During the first year there were seven regular attendants; at the end of the second year there were 44 members.

Rev. W.J. Bagby followed Mr. Gay from 1903-1905. He and his wife were zealous believers in foreign missions, and Mrs. Bagby is quoted as having said soon after her arrival: "We will have a Foreign Missionary Society here if only I and my daughter Bulus belong."

The Ladies Aid Society was going strong, but the Home Missionary Society, organized in 1900, was dropped, and the activities of the women were centered on this new Foreign Society. Mrs. Bagby was able to inspire the women, and during the first year the society began the support of a native Bible Woman in Korea at a yearly salary of \$60.00, raised by voluntary contributions. More than the necessary \$60.00 was raised, so the society applied the balance toward the support of Miss Blanche Howell (or Howard), who was training at Scarritt College for missionary work in Brazil.

For all purposes that year the Society raised \$196.63. Mrs. R.B. Alley, District Secretary, said it was the best report she received.

The first officers of this society were: president, Mrs. Bagby; vice president, Mrs. S.E. Chase; secretary, Mrs. W.J. McAnally; and treasurer, Mrs. W.H. Ragan.

Rev. T.F. Marr served as pastor from 1905 to 1907. Since Mrs. Marr was a conference officer in the Home Missionary Society, she felt that it had been a mistake to do away with that society, so it was reorganized. All members of the Foreign Society joined this one also, and the two societies continued to function until the Methodist authorities at Nashville decided that the two groups would do better as one, and the union became Women's Missionary Auxiliary.

The activities of the new society included all the activities of the earlier societies. Among the aims set up were: to develop and maintain Christian work among women and children at home and abroad; to cultivate Christian family life; to enlist and organize the efforts of Christian women, young people, and children in behalf of mature and foreign groups; and to cooperate with the pastors in the church's responsibilities and to seek fellowship with Christian women of this and other lands in establishing the Christian order around the world.

Women who served as presidents of this society and who are still active in the affairs of Wesley Memorial Church are: Mrs. W.S. O'Neal, Mrs. J.V. Wilson, Mrs. H.T. Hudson,

Mrs. W.C. Idol, Mrs. W.B. Hall, Mrs. J. E. Marsh, Mrs. W.T. Powell, and Mrs. R.T. Amos.

So far as records show, there were only two life members of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary. Mrs. J.E. Kirkman was the first, and in 1936 her daughter, Marguerite (Mrs. Forrest Murray) was the second. Mrs. Kirkman presented the pin, which today is one of Mrs. Murray's prized possessions, to her daughter.

A number of life memberships have been bestowed in other of the Women's organizations.

In the fall of 1908, during the pastorate of Rev. J.E. Thompson, a group of young women met at the parsonage on Washington Street with Miss Mary Thompson, daughter of the pastor (Now Mrs. Hancock of Winter Haven, Florida), and organized the Daisy Davies Missionary Society. For many years this group of young women, generally somewhat younger than those in the Ladies Aid and the Women's Missionary Auxiliary, worked hard and efficiently along with the other groups.

Several events in which the Daisy Davies Society participated appear in the records. Among them was a joint meeting held on September 3, 1923 of the Missionary Auxiliary and the Daisy Davies Society at which Mrs. W.C. Jones described the Passion Play at Oberammergau, which she had attended earlier in the summer; Mrs. R.K. Stewart also spoke at this meeting.

Also in 1927 a banquet was held for all the women in the church with the two societies serving as hostesses. Mrs. C.C. Weaver, president of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary of the Western N.C. Conference, was the speaker.

Some of the Daisy Davies presidents were Mrs. W.R. Morrow, Mrs. John R. Peacock, Mrs. J.E. Millis, Mrs. H.A. Millis, Mrs. F.H. Murray, Mrs. J.W. Chandler, Mrs. R.H. Sechrest, Mrs. J. Allen Austin, and Miss Genevieve Moore.

In 1910 Mrs. A.J. Owen organized the first missionary society for children, called at first "Bright Jewels." Two years later this name was changed to "Children's Missionary Society. From 1912 to 1925 when it was dissolved, this society was under the leadership of Mrs. J.C. Siceloff.

The Ladies Aid Society, which for more than 35 years, from its organization in 1888, had played such an important and powerful part in every step of the church's development, was disbanded on December 16, 1929. There is no way of enumerating the many and varied activities sponsored by this group of hardworking women. They had contributed to the development and progress of the church at every step of its growth.

The union of Methodism is well known in history. At the General Conference in 1939, the three groups of Methodism in America, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the M.E. Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church were united into the one group, the Methodist Church.

On September 2, 1940, a meeting of the women of Wesley Memorial Church was held. Invitations had been issued by the Women's Missionary Auxiliary of which Mrs. R.T. Amos was president, to every woman in the church, to attend a charter meeting to be held in the Sunday school auditorium at 3:30 in the afternoon.

Mrs. Amos presided. Devotions were led by Mrs. J.W. Austin, Sr. Dr. Blackard, pastor, announced that the meeting of the Western N.C. Conference would be held in Wesley

Memorial Church from October 22-25, and lodging and breakfast for the delegates were needed.

Then Mrs. Amos adjourned the Women's Missionary Auxiliary, and Dr. Blackard explained the new organization, the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Mrs. A.M. Utley, Sr. was elected temporary chairman; and Mrs. H.A. Millis read the slate of officers: president, Mrs. W.C. Idol; recording secretary, Mrs. A.M. Utley; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Forrest Murray; treasurer, Mrs. R.T. Holton, assistant treasurer, Mrs. W.E. Mitchell.

Dr. Blackard announced that these officers would serve fifteen months, until January 1941. In an impressive ceremony Dr. Blackard installed these officers. Then Mrs. Amos appointed committee and circle chairmen. She asked the women to sign the charter book which would be kept open all during September. Before the end of the month 388 women signed and became charter members of the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

For the twenty years since that date this devoted group of women have continued the consecrated service which the former societies had given.

In 1941 there were eight active circles, and two Wesleyan Service Guilds that had been organized; one meeting in the evening for the professional and business women, and one for the young girls of high school and college age. The second group became the Alma McCain Guild, taking its name in honor of one of the noblest and most consecrated women in Wesley Memorial Church – or in High Point – Mrs. H.W. McCain.

In March of the next year, 1942, the W.S.C.S. of Wesley Memorial entertained the second annual conference of the W.S.C.S. of the

Western N.C. Conference. There were 372 women delegates to the conference. One of the principle speakers was Miss Daisy Davies, whose subject was "Christ's Way The Only Way."

In 1945 Mrs. Alma McCain was honored by being made president-emeritus and life member of the W.S.C.S. In that same year the W.S.C.S. undertook a large part of the parsonage upkeep and a share in the salary of a Bible teacher in the city schools.

In 1947 Mrs. McCain was elected president, and in 1951 Mrs. A.M. Utley, Sr. was given a life membership pin in recognition of her fine work as president for two years. Several other members of the W.S.C.S. have been given life membership pins, among them Mrs. H.A. Millis, and the latest presentation to Mrs. R.T. Holton in the summer of 1960.

Among those in the Wesleyan Service Guild who have received life membership pins are Mrs. J. Raymond Welch, Mrs. J.E. Horney, Miss Eleanor Young, and in 1960 Miss Vera Idol.

To name all the women who have been active, devoted, and energetic workers in all the women's organization of the church would come very close to calling the roll of the women members of the church.

Among women who have served as president – and surely many names are going to be unintentionally omitted – are and have been: Of the Ladies Aid Society: Mrs. Oliver Causey, Mrs. W.H. Ragan, Mrs. O.E. Kearns, Miss Venetia Smith, and Mrs. J.F. Hayden.

Of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary and the Daisy Davies Society, the officers were listed earlier in the chapter. Since the organization of the Woman's Society of Christian Service in 1940, presidents have been: Mrs. R.T. Amos, Mrs. L.C. Matton, Mrs. V.C. Sale, Mrs. H.A. Millis, Mrs. A.M. Utley, Sr., Mrs. Harry Hendrick, Mrs. R.M. Bundy, Mrs. W.B. Hall, Mrs. Charles Risch, Mrs. J.W. Lindsay, and Mrs. W.T. Powell, who is president in 1960.

Among those who have served as presidents of the Wesleyan Service Guild since its organization in 1941 have been: Mrs. Leona Muse, Miss Lillian Marlowe, Miss Margaretta Austin (Mrs. N.P. Yarborough), Mrs. J. Raymond Welch, Mrs. J.E. Horney, Mrs. Charles Gueth, Miss Eleanor Young, Mrs. Ralph Norman, Mrs. L.P. Lawing, Miss Margaret Wilson, and the present president, Miss Sara Beth Smith.

While it is not possible to name the women who have held offices aside from president in the societies through the years, it seems pertinent to give the leading officers and Circle Chairmen of the W.S.C.S. for 1960-1961:

President Mrs. W. T. Powell Past President Mrs. J.W. Lindsay

First Vice-President

Mrs. Jack Rives

Second Vice-President

Mrs. J.W. Austin, Jr.

Recording Secretary

Mrs. John N. Crowder

Promotion Secretary

Mrs. W.C. Folger

Treasurer Mrs. L.B. Dutton
Member-at-large Mrs. C.C. Herbert, Jr.

Coordinators

Alma McCain Guild

Mrs. Harry Bell

Wesleyan Service Guild

Mrs. J.W. Lindsay

President of Alma McCain Guild

Mrs. W.E. Linthicum, II

President of Wesleyan Service Guild

Miss Sara E. Smith

Circles:

- 1. Mrs. R.T. Amos, Jr.
- 2. Mrs. Robert K. Arthur, Jr.

- 3. Mrs. L.P. Earnhardt
- 4. Mrs. J.A. Hart, Jr.
- 5. Mrs. W.R. Wilson
- 6. Mrs. E.L. Grimsley
- 7. Mrs. A. Wade Marsh
- 8. Mrs. O. Delk Smith
- 9. Mrs. Harold M. Schwab
- 10. Mrs. T.W. Sprinkle
- 11. Mrs. J. Richard Kellam
- 12. Mrs. Gaither C. Frye
- 13. Mrs. Wade H. McInnis
- 14. Mrs. Charles L. Tucker
- 15. Mrs. James H. Wall, Jr.

The needs which the W.S.C.S. supplies do not differ much from those which in the early days the Ladies Aid Society cared for. There is still the great need for money for even more and varied needs of the larger church and wider field of service, only today higher cost of everything calls for more money, turnip green dinners have advanced from 50 cents to a dollar; turkey dinners from 75 cents to \$1.50, and the women engage in sales, serving meals for various organizations, individual pledges, and many other devices to make the money they use for mission, charities, furnishings for the church and parsonage, and certain other projects which they have accomplished.

An office in the church which is of prime importance is that of church hostess. It is impossible to evaluate or enumerate the services which this office entails. Mrs. Hunter Sechrest was the first to serve as hostess; then for several years Mrs. Ray Nibbelink, and after her the present hostess who has served since 1954 Mrs. E.C. Harville.

The Wednesday night family suppers have become an important feature of the church program; there are many Sunday school class suppers; supper meetings of trustees, stewards and associate stewards; and many, many others. For all of these the hostess plans the menus, superintends the cooking (much of which she does herself) and serving, always cheerful gracious, and efficient.

Wesley Memorial women have from the beginning borne their share of the burden of all the work of the church. From Paul's letters it is evident that there were women active in the early Christian church – Lydia, his grandmother Priscilla, Eunice, Dorcas and others.



Chapter 11 The Men's Work

In 1860 in the first record of the church organization, James C. Moore was named as "class-leader," and nine men were listed among the class of twenty-six which composed the membership of the church in the pastorate of C.M. Anderson (1860-1861).

In the latest record of church officers compiled in 1960, one hundred years later, Mr. George W. Lyles, Jr. is chairman of the official board, with 90 members of the Official Board; James M. Woollen, chairman of the Associate Board with 90 members of that board. There are nine trustees, and twenty Ex-officio Stewards, four of whom are women.

The nine trustees are: J.A. Johnson, Tom J. Kearns, Charles W. McAnally, W.B. Hall, W.C. Idol, H.F. Hunsucker, R.T. Amos, W.B. McEwen, and J.R. Peacock.

Another group of men belong to an important group – that of Honorary Stewards. This division was organized in 1952 and has enrolled in the eight years since that time 26 men, whose years and honorable and faithful service entitle them to an honorary status. In 1960 there are 14 men in this group: J.D. Brame, H.T. Douglas, J.A. Eshelman, A.E. Futrelle, Melvin A. Hayes, H.F. Hunsucker, V.A.J. Idol, Fred P. Ingram, G.H. Kearns, W.B. McEwen, A.A. Oliver, W.W. Snider, and C.S. Welborn.

In addition to these Boards, there are many commissions and committees to whom all assigned specific areas of church work and organization. These divisions include about 250 more men and women. Naturally there are in all these groups some duplication of names.

Leaders of the church in 1960 are:
Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr., Minister
C.W. Buckey, Associate Minister
R. Delbert Byrum, Minister of Education
W. Howard Coble, Minister of Music.

When we add to the above the Church staff and officers of the Women's organizations, it counts up to a large official family. But with a church membership of 2,269 members at the close of the conference year 1959-1960, it can easily be understood that a large organization is necessary.

In 1914, when Wesley Memorial Church on Main Street was built, J.H. Johnson was chairman of the Board of Trustees; J.W. Harriss was chairman of the Board of Stewards, and Mr. Frank Gurley was secretary and treasurer.

A great leader in the Washington Street Church was Mr. Fred N. Tate, who had joined the church in 1902 during the pastorate of J.E. Gay. He was for many years chairman of the Board of Stewards and served on many committees. In 1925 he became chairman of the building committee when the religious education building was planned. He served as a delegate to District, Annual, and General Conferences. He also sang in the choir of Washington Street Church, and many of those who were in that church remember his resonant bass voice. He died in 1945, a great leader lost from the church.

Others who have served as chairmen of the Board of Stewards were: H.A. Millis, V.A.J. Idol, Dr. Dred Peacock, R.T. Amos, W.B. McEwen, W.T. Powell, Charles F. Carroll, Jr., Charles McAnally, Amos R. Kearns, and chairman in 1960 George W. Lyles, Jr.

Three interesting regulations regarding the stewards organization appear in the records.

In 1920 a resolution was passed limiting the time the chairman of the board could hold office consecutively to two years.

In 1949 a resolution was unanimously passed stating that all stewards who do not attend at least forty percent of the meetings would have their names automatically dropped. The only acceptable excuse was illness of self or a member of the family, or absence from the city.

In 1958 the Quarterly Conference proposed a new rotation of stewards. A member went off the Board after five years of consecutive membership; then was ineligible for two years instead of one.

In 1927 a Junior Board of Stewards was organized composed of 60 members. Mr. L.R. Terry was elected chairman; J. Everett Marsh, Vice-Chairman; J.W. Chandler, secretary; and Oma Harville, treasurer. Somewhat later the title of this board was changed to Associate Board. Among the men who have served as chairmen of this board are: Geddie Strickland, Harry Hanson, George R. Martin, Holt McPherson, Charles Kearns, George Davis, Lynwood Smith, Frank Sizemore, Jr., Al W. Klemme, Jr., and in 1960 James W. Woollen.

Another important officer has been J.E. Millis, who has served the church long and faithfully in many capacities. He has been chairman of the Commission on Finance for 22 years, since 1938, and still holds the office in 1960, and has taken an active part in plans and arrangements for the new church.

Another organization of men that was very active for a number of years was the Men's Club, of which the late Stephen C. Clark was the promoter.

He was a very active member of the Peacock Bible Class, but he felt there should be an organization where more men could be brought into close touch with church affairs on week days as well as on Sunday mornings. Therefore, on February 26, 1924 at a dinner meeting he, with the assistance of a group of leading men in the church, organized a club to be called the Wesley Memorial Men's Club.

The purposes set forth by the executive committee in a handbook compiled by the club were: to promote the spirit of the fellowship among the men of Wesley Memorial Church and to promote and maintain all good works of the church by relating men more definitely to the church.

Every Methodist man, or man of Methodist inclination, over eighteen was eligible to membership. Dr. Dred Peacock was elected to life membership because of his work with the men in Sunday school. Luncheon meetings were to be held monthly and the cost per plate should not exceed one dollar. An annual meeting was set up to be held sometime in January.

S.C. Clark was named as first president, with W.C. McEwen as vice-president. The late F.J. Sizemore was secretary and M.J. Crowder, treasurer. Dr. E.K. McLarty, pastor at the time, was named as chaplain.

Directors were Tom J. Kearns, S.A. Gayle, Schubal C. Kirkman, E.C. Harville, and J.D. Brame.

The Standing committees reveal the main interest and intentions of the club.

The work of the reception and good fellowship committee was not only to greet the men and make them feel at home in the meetings, but to extend this service to the church and prayer services.

The church attendance committee was set up to effect plans for increasing attendance at all services, especially at the Sunday evening and Wednesday night prayer service. Another committee of special note was the boys' work committee which was to develop a spirit of cooperation with the Sunday school, U.M.C.A. and Boy Scouts.

The music committee not only arranged for music at the meeting but served to increase interest in volunteers for the church choir.

The list of men who participated in the activities of the club during the years of its existence included most of the men of the church and many who were not members. Prominent speakers from various religious organizations as well as from other professions spoke at meetings.

At the first meeting Mr. Henry W. Dwire, editor of the Twin City Sentinel, Winston-Salem, was the speaker. On April 1, 1924 the second meeting was a banquet, with Prof. Harold D. Mayer, professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina who spoke on "The Possibilities of a Boy". There were 135 men present.

On November 1, 1925 another banquet was held. Mr. E.D. Broadhurst, attorney from Greensboro, was the speaker. At a meeting on December 18, about 100 men heard Rev. L.B. Hayes from Park Place Methodist Church in Greensboro. At this meeting a collection of \$40.00 was taken to provide Christmas cheer for needy families. On February 6, a Father-Son banquet was held.

On June 12, a joint barbecue of the Wesley Memorial Men's Club and the First Presbyterian Men was held at the Country Club. Present from Wesley Memorial were 117 men. S.C. Clark, president, presided.

On 1926 W.B. McEwen became president.

Speaker for the meeting on March 17, 1927 was Cameron Peck, Personnel Director of the New York Stock Exchange, and on June 23, 1927 Dr. Elbert Russell of Duke University spoke.

In 1928 membership had reached 300. This year M.C. Rowland was elected president.

There is no record of just when the club ceased to function, but there is no doubt about the good will and assistance to the church that the club fostered in the years of its existence.

Of the total contribution of money, time, and work which the men of Wesley Memorial have given, and are still giving, no estimate can possible be given.

It is because of the loyal and consecrated service of the men and women that Wesley Memorial Church has grown from a small band of men and women sitting on benches on a platform in a grove of trees to a great congregation worshipping in a beautiful Gothic structure covering several acres.



	X.	

Chapter 12 Young People's Work

Apart from Sunday school, the first recorded organization for young people was the Epworth League. That this was in existence in Washington Street Church was proved by the list of officers in the Epworth League enclosed in the cornerstone, placed there in 1916. Samuel Davis is listed as president. There are also members of Wesley Memorial in 1960 who remember well working with the League in Washington Street Church.

However, the group must have disbanded, for on January 21, 1923 an item in the church bulletin stated that a movement was to be made to organize an Epworth League, and those who desired to enroll as charter members were urged to give their names to W.B. Hall.

On January 28, another item announced that the organization was effected with about 100 members joining and on the evening of February 3, 1924, Dr. E.K. McLarty preached a sermon to the League. The next mention of the League is of February 6, 1927, when Ruth Welborn resigned as president, and Howard L. Collie succeeded her. In 1930 Dorothy Kirkman was president.

On January 15, 1934, under the leadership of Liston Pope, who was at this time Director of Religious Education at the church, a supper meeting was held, at which time the Epworth League became the Young People's Department.

In 1916, in addition to the Epworth League, there were missionary societies for the children and young people. Two of these were the Young People's Missionary Society and the Junior Missionary Society.

It was in 1916 that Mrs. Alma McCain organized the Young People's Missionary Society. Girls from Mrs. A.J. Owen's Children's Missionary Society were promoted to the Young People's group at the age of twelve.

The society took active part in missionary programs, engaged in missionary study courses, and contributed to various causes. Among their projects was that of sending clothing to Brevard Institute.

There were 27 charter members. Though some of the names have been changed by marriage, they are easily recognizable as active workers in the church in 1960: Vera King, Odelle Peacock, Norma Dutton, Nancy Kirkman, Mae Kirkman, Helen Reynolds, and Ruth Welborn.

For several years Mrs. Arthur Marsh served as an assistant to Mrs. McCain. By 1920 there were three divisions of the Society. Mrs. McCain continued to superintend the older group and Mrs. F.P. Ingram and Mrs. Mary Thompson Kearns were at the heads of the two junior divisions.

In the church bulletin for January 7, 1923, announcement was made that at the last meeting of the Young People's Missionary Society the name was changed to the Alma McCain Missionary Society with Margaret Clinard as president. The Junior Missionary Society was continued with Nell Adams as president and Mrs. L.R. Terry as leader.

Helen Clark Austin, daughter of S.C. Clark, had been a member of these societies at a time when Mrs. J.C. Siceloff was leader, and on July 19, 1931 she spoke at the evening service on "Why I am Going As a Missionary".

Of these years Helen is quoted as saying: "The influence and leadership of Mrs.

Siceloff and Mrs. H.W. McCain, two early leaders in missionary interests, played a great part in cultivating and stimulating me to press on toward the high calling in Christ Jesus."

She went to China as the first missionary from Wesley Memorial Church and for several years taught English and served as dean of women at Soochow University. Her salary in 1931 as set by the Board of Mission was \$950.

In 1934 Bishop Kern wrote: "When Helen Clark came to China, it was not merely the coming of another missionary; it was an event." Of the work of a man who arrived about the same time and of Helen, the Bishop continued: "Due to the presence and services of these two persons very largely, the religious atmosphere of Soochow University has been changed."

In 1925 many tributes to Helen from those in Wesley Memorial Church who had known her from childhood were printed in the church bulletin. The one by Mrs. H.W. McCain is characteristic: "She is not working with the Chinese from a sense of duty, but because she loves them... and the Chinese young people love her.

In 1945 Miss Elsie Ellen Moore was added to the church staff as Director of Religious Education and remained until 1954. At the second quarterly conference on March 29, 1946, Dr. Paul Hardin, pastor from 1945-1949 – and now in July 1960 the newly elected bishop of the South Carolina district, whom we delight to honor – reported that the youth work was progressing well under Miss Moore.

In 1945 Helena Upshaw was made president of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, which included the intermediate, senior and young people's departments. At the first quarterly conference, December 16, 1946, Miss Moore

reported the growth of the MYF, who were meeting every Sunday evening. Betsy Hardin was president at the time.

In 1949 Dr. Hardin reported that the youth work in the church was outstanding. He reported four young people who had dedicated themselves to full-time Christian service: James Harbison, Jr. Margaret Little, Nancy Erwin, and Ralph Tilden.

In 1949 Miss Marjorie Case was named Direction of Christian Education in the youth and adult work, and Miss Hulda Whitely, director from nursery through junior high age.

In 1950 Frances Mull was president of MYF, and in 1952 Stuart Fountain. By this time membership had grown to 65.

In 1953 Richard Crowder, who graduated with honors from Duke in June, accepted the work of directing the summer recreation of young people. He directed the camp at Lake Junaluska from June 15-22 for junior and senior high school ages. He worked as youth director at Junaluska for six summers.

In the summer of 1954, a caravan of young people from MYF worked for several weeks in Cuba, and in 1957 a second caravan engaged in mission work around Havana. In this caravan were: Judy Risch, Shirley Schaner, Betsy Davis, Sandra James, Jimmy Casey, and Tommy Miller, with Miss Hulda Whitely, counselor, and Dr. N.M. Harrison.

In the summer of 1956 another caravan worked the Scandinavian countries. Rev. Walter J. Miller, pastor (1952-1957) and Mrs. Miller were with them.

As a result of the Cuban caravan, Lucia Garcia came from Havana to summer camp at Junaluska, then enrolled at High Point College where she graduated in 1959. She is married to Glen Fletcher, a 1960 ministerial graduate of H.P.C., who will continue his studies at the Westminster Divinity College in Washington.

Two girls from Finland came to High Point College as a result of the Scandinavian caravan. One of them left college at the end of her sophomore year to be married, but the other graduated in 1960.

In 1957 a summer camp for young people was held at Camp Lurecrest at Lake Lure, with Rev. Herbert Waldrop, assistant pastor in 1957, and Mrs. Waldrop in charge.

It was in 1957 also that Miss Sarah Leake from Charlotte came to work with the young people, with Garland Young, student at High Point College, as part-time assistant.

Since 1957 Rev. C. William Buckey, a young minister of great efficiency and promise, has been associate minister and has worked actively with the young people. In addition to many other duties, he preaches at the vesper services on Sunday evening; the MYF has charge of the services.

On Wednesday October 7, 1969, a Worker's Conference Dinner was held, welcoming R. Delbert Byrum, minister of education. Mr. Byrum spoke on "What Are We Building For?"

In 1960 Miss Ann Tyler came from Alabama to direct the work of the children, and was welcomed with a tea in the church social hall on January 6.

Another phase of youth work in the church that deserves particular emphasis is that of Scouting, both Boy and Girl Scouts.

Mr. W.M. Marr, principal of the high school and later superintendent of City schools, teacher in Sunday school and later a National Scout Executive, organized at Wesley Memorial Church the first Scout patrol in High Point, and one of the first four organized in the country. Many men active in the church today were in the group. Among them were: O. Arthur Kirkman, Carleton Kirkman, Lawton Dutton, and Sam Strickland.

The Scout work has continued from that time with increasing numbers.

In 1926 at the beginning of Scout Week on February 7, Dr. McLarty preached a sermon especially to the Scouts on "Scouting." This custom has continued to be followed by all ministers since that time.

In 1941 it was reported that there were two Boy Scout and two Girl Scout troops in the church. The next report several years later gave: 4 troops of Boy Scouts; 4 troops of Girl Scouts; 4 packs of Cubs composed of 6 Dens; and Post 4 of Explorers. Many leading men and women have been leaders of these groups.

The church had bought property valued at \$11,500 at Shirley and Blaine Streets and had built small buildings to be used by the Scouts. In 1949 the Senior Board gave approval to the contract for a Girl Scout hut to be built on the same property. A Committee headed by Mr. Charles Kearns solicited \$5,600 to build it.

In 1959 Mr. Bill Buckey reported that he working with eleven Scouts on their God and Country awards, and on Sunday, May 15, 1960, all of the eleven received the award, one of the largest classes on record to receive the award. These boys were: Mills Brinson, Bobby Garner, Harold Hartenstein, Brantley Kearns, Henry Malone, Jimmy Millis, Dick Nicholson, Rick Shepherd, Cliff Snider, Mike White and Chris Wilson.

Certainly one of the most important parts of the church in its youth work is its enlistment and sponsoring of young ministers to enter either ministries of religious education or active pastorates.

Among these who have been among the membership of Wesley Memorial Church as they pursued their college training are: Parker Hager, Perry England, John Carter, Joseph Haworth, Harold Austin, James Harbison, Richard Crowder, James Hall, Ralph Tilden, Bob Younts, Bobby Joe Dennis, George Robichaux, Frances Griffith, Allen deHart, Jack Peacock, Paul Moss, Tommy Miller, and Charles Vaughn.



Chapter 13 Missions and Missionaries

From very early days Washington Street Church became known as a missionary church. The organization and activity of the various missionary societies give ample proof of the seriousness of that interest.

In 1920, when the chimes were bought in Baltimore, a church official is quoted as having said: "The reason that the Methodist church is a live church is because it is a missionary church, first, last, and all the time."

Someone has said that the true test of the missionary spirit of the church is whether its missionary offering is equal to its offering for other things. According to conference records, Wesley Memorial in the past seems to have exceeded this proportion. It has been a matter of justifiable pride that Wesley Memorial could report each year at the annual conference, "Paid in full".

As long ago as 1922, W.O. Goode, then secretary of the Christian Education Movement in the Conference, wrote in the N.C. Christian Advocate:

"Wesley Memorial Church has the distinction of being the first church in the Western N.C. Conference to pay in full the first installment of its subscription to the Christian Education Movement."

He then commended the activity of "three big-hearted laymen, R.O. Lindsay, O.E. Kearns, and J.M.S. Salisbury," and of the 20 men who assisted in making the collections. The total amount paid was \$6,363.20.

In 1932, during the pastorate of Dr. G. Ray Jordan (1930-1933), this item appeared in the High Point Enterprise:

"In times of war the patriotism of those who remain away from the battle fronts is measured by the support they give to their soldiers in the front line trenches.... Last Sunday the church raised \$11,000 for missions, the front line trenches of Christianity."

This amount was raised from comparatively small amounts up to \$720. It came from individuals; from the Men's Bible Class that gave \$1,000; and personal solicitations for certain missionary specials amounting to \$6.000.

At the Annual Conference of 1932 in Winston, commenting on the report made by pastor, Dr. Jordan, Bishop Edwin M. Mouzon said: "Brethren, I am of the opinion that Wesley Memorial is one of the great churches in Southern Methodism."

The church had paid the conference appropriation of \$5,585 in full; it had paid \$7,300 voluntary Kingdom Extension offering; \$1,251 to Children's Home at Winston; and \$405 to the superannuate endowment for retired ministers. The total of money raised during the year was \$40,139.

In 1927 Wesley Memorial's missionary special, Dr. S.A. Stewart of Japan, was taken over by the Woman's Council, and H.S. Ogburn was selected in his place. Another special was a professor in Kwansei Galarin, Kobe, Japan. In addition to paying \$5,000 for the Conference Benevolences, Wesley Memorial supported three men and six Bible women in foreign fields. Two other specials were Yi Hun Choon in Korea and Yi In Sun in Siberia.

In 1933 other missionary specials listed were: Helen Clark, Soochow University, China; R.J. Parker, P.E. El Paso District of West Mexico Mission; Rev. Rhee Sang Choon, teacher in Boys' School, Songo, Korea;

Rev. Karel Blommsert, Pastor of our largest church in Brussels, Belgium; and Audrea Diaz, Pastor, Chihuahua District, Mexico.

The comment is added that the church has 16 missionaries in Korea, Belgium, Mexico, Poland, Japan, and Africa.

In 1935, during the second pastorate of Rev. W.A. Lambeth, a strenuous debt-lifting campaign was entered upon. Money was owed on the parsonage, and for many years Wesley Memorial had been assisting Calvary and Ward Street churches in handling a number of their needs.

R.T. Amos was general chairman and J.E. Millis chairman of an initial gift committee to raise \$58,570. Mr. Amos and Mr. Millis had secured pledges from the following ten families for \$35,250, on condition that the total amount be completed in three years: the families of R.T. Amos, J.E. Millis, Chas. L. Amos, O.E. Kearns, Mrs. J.H. Adams, H.F. Hunsucker, R.O. Lindsay, Mrs. M.J. Wrenn, G.H. Kearns, and H.A. Millis

The indebtedness was as follows:

Education Building Parsonage	\$ 15,000 \$ 14,000
(Hillcrest Drive)	
Calvary Church	\$ 15,750
Ward Street Church	\$ <u>14,800</u>
Estimated	\$ 58,750
Accumulated Interest	\$ <u>6,250</u>
Total	\$ 65,000

The challenge was accepted and a steering committee was appointed. W.T. Powell was made chairman and J.A. Johnson assistant chairman of the general solicitation committee. Fifteen teams and their captains worked hard. The Women's Auxiliary, of which Mrs. F.H. Murray was president, made a generous subscription.

It was announced that if the goal of \$65,000 in subscriptions had been reached by Sunday night, May 26, 1935, the chimes would be played to celebrate the victory. It was completed at the very last minute, and an informal celebration was observed under the leadership of Dr. Lambeth. The indebtedness on Wesley Memorial's own equipment was wiped out, and Ward Street and Calvary churches cleared of mortgages.

A note appeared in Conference notes that "Wesley Memorial has mothered and helped raise the better part of a dozen Methodist churches."

One of the greatest contributions to missions was a private contribution made by a private individual, the Foundation set up by Mr. G.H. Kearns, in 1935, at Duke University, for graduate study of ministers or ministerial students. The Foundation began with \$1,200 for one student in 1935, and by 1959-60 had grown to where five men were at Duke, each receiving a \$2,000 grant. More than fifty men from more than a dozen denominations have received Ph.D. degrees through the foundation, and Kearns Fellows are either teachers or administrators in many states of the union. Mr. Kearns, whose generosity to Wesley Memorial has been emphasized elsewhere, derives great joy from this experience. He says that the program can go on and on as the money continues to bear interest. "I believe the Lord God has directed me in carrying out this plan," he says.

In this same year of 1935 Bishop Kern took W.A. Lambeth from Wesley Memorial to direct the "Save Junaluska" campaign, and sent E.E. Wiley, Jr. to Wesley Memorial as assistant pastor.

In 1936, the list of missionary specials had grown greatly. A statement appearing in a church document stated: "Wesley Memorial is one of the greatest missionary churches in

the entire Southern Methodist denomination." Mentioning only the fields and the number in each field, without specifying names, are:

China	5
Korea	4
Japan	2
Belgium	2
Mexico	2
South America	1

These were in addition to some mentioned earlier.

In 1936 over \$10,000 was reported as contributed for benevolent causes outside the parish.

In 1940, \$10,000 was promised to Main Street building campaign on the condition that Church Extension loan the church \$15,000, and the church itself raise \$10,000. Wesley Memorial gave the \$10,000 in 1941.

To Calvary and Ward Street churches, respectively, \$100 was given toward the support of the pastors. In 1940, \$1,675 was given to foreign missions; \$1,000 to Home work, and \$100 to High Point College.

In 1941, the W.S.C.S., with Mrs. R.T. Amos as president, worked with civic groups in war work. They cooperated with the Needlework Guild, Red Cross, Bundles for Britain, and Community Chest. They also assisted two Negro girls attending Hanes Institutional Church, and one at Bennett College. They assisted in work among the under-privileged Negroes in North Carolina mountains.

At the fourth quarterly conference in 1941, the following report was made:

\$5,500 to World Services Benevolences \$1,375 to missionary specials, in addition to that raised by the W.S.C.S. and Sunday school

\$100 to Golden Cross \$300 to Elkin Hospital \$500 to "Day of Compassion"

\$1,150 to Children's Home (in addition to church school specials)

\$1,200 to Director of Religious Education at Main Street

\$10,000 to Main Street building fund \$20,946 for all other purposes

Wesley Memorial continued its interest in Calvary and Ward Street Churches by contributing \$400. A collection of \$537 was taken for College Place Church in Greensboro where 759 Methodist girls from Woman's College attended. Seven children at the Children's Home were being clothed.

Every other month the pastor or assistant pastor and the choir held services at Sandy Ridge prison camp.

In 1943 while Dr. Rozzelle was pastor (1941-1945), he and other ministers in High Point, working with outstanding laymen and women, were able to bring about the study of Bible in the city high school, and to secure Miss Ollie Sherrill as the teacher. Though the course is not now taught in the high school, Miss Mabel Cherry has, for several years, done a wonderful job of teaching Bible in the elementary grades.

In 1946 the Wesleyan Service Guild was furnishing milk for a family of four, and was contributing to the Scarritt Fund, to a school in Argentina, and to the District Office Fund. The Guild from the beginning has contributed freely and generously to many missionary specials.

In 1948, on June 27, the day was sponsored by City Missionary Society as Brooks Memorial Day. Brooks Memorial Church was trying to raise \$10,000, and Wesley Memorial and other white churches were helping. Also St. Matthews Church had appealed for help in liquidating a debt. They lacked \$781 to finish building the church. This Wesley Memorial contributed.

In September 1948, Mrs. Lily Watson, secretary, received a letter from the superintendent of the Sunday school at St. Matthews church thanking Wesley Memorial for 36 primary chairs.

Missionary specials were continued with the addition of work with Bennett College, the George O. Robinson School in Puerto Rico, Mary J. Johnston Hospital in Manilla, P.I., and Union Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires.

In 1935 Miss Frances Eshelman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Eshelman, assumed the duties in New York City as associate editor of literature for the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church. She had had previous experience in editing religious magazines. She was also associated with the Layman's Movement, and toured with the Methodist Goodwill Tour in 1951, visiting five European countries in addition to 46 states in the U.S.A. and two Canadian provinces.

The W.S.C.S. continues its work in missions. In 1951 the W.S.C.S. reported: A pledge of \$2,200 for missionary work; tuition of a Chinese girl, Laura Ton, at Scarritt; 1,000 copes of "Sanctuary" mailed to church members during Lent, Christian literature placed in several doctors' offices and in jails; contributed money to Scarritt, Pheiffer, and Cherokee Indians, and to Japan, N. Africa, Malaya and the Philippines; sent boxes of clothing to Japan and Korea; sent 1,979 coupons to build a fence around Bethlehem House in Winston; and provided a number of hot lunches and milk to schools in High Point.

In 1957 three of the young leaders in the church gave a program at an eleven o'clock service on tithing. Harriss Covington was the director of the program; George W. Lyles, Jr., promotional chairman, and Tom Latimer, training chairman. This program was held in connection with a Stewardship of Possession

Program set up for every Methodist church in the United States.

Upon entering on his ministry in High Point, Rev. Walter J. Miller (1952-1957), wrote a dedication which goes to the heart of the meaning of the church at home and abroad:

"To the holy task of guiding young and old into a vital and intelligent Christian experience, of promoting fellowship among neighbors and building a better community life; of offering encouragement to the family and the home.

To full participation in the world program of Christendom through generous giving; through intelligent study of all peoples and nations; through prayerful cooperation with all who work for the relief of human misery and the establishment of world brotherhood."

And again Mr. Miller wrote:

"In cooperation with almost 10,000,000 American Methodists, Wesley Memorial helps carry messages of Christ to the entire world. Our church helps support a missionary in Cuba, aids in building new churches in this section, helps build a church in Hong Kong, has a part in constructing a Methodist college in Alaska. We join in maintaining the Children's Home, Home for the Aged, hospitals, rest homes, overseas relief, and numerous other Christian causes through Methodist Services."

Now a few years later, some details have changed, but the same missionary spirit continues. In 1960 Wesley Memorial has concentrated its foreign missionary special help for Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Stewart, missionaries in Cuba, and Reverend and Mrs. Edwin A. Hackney, missionaries in India.



Chapter 14 Music and the Choirs

Methodists have always been a singing people. It is their heritage from their founders. John Wesley composed many hymns, and his brother Charles composed 5,000. Though not all of them are known, hymnbooks of nearly all Protestant denominations contain some of them, and in our Methodist hymnals, many of our best known and best loved hymns were written by either John or Charles Wesley.

Though the records do not include names of singers of the first little church, there is a record that Miss Bettie Sapp (Mrs. J.E. Kirkman) was organist in about 1887; and members of Washington Street Church remember clearly that for some time she played the piano there.

Mrs. Mary T. Hancock recalls that during her father's pastorate (1907-1910), Miss Clara Boyd was pianist and directing the choir. Among members of the choir were Miss Edith Moore (Mrs. A. Sherrod), Mrs. J.J. Farriss, (Mrs. R.K. Stewart), Mary Thompson (Mrs. Hancock), Virge Garrett, and Ad. Burrus. It was also recalled that others in the choir were Miss Genevieve Moore, Mr. Fred Tate, Mr. Frank Gurley, Mr. J.D. Mann, and Mr. W.G. Kirkman.

No further records are extant of the music at Washington Street, but with the removal to Wesley Memorial on Main Street, the history of the music and the choirs is more available.

One of the lovely voices of the Washington Street days and the early days at Wesley Memorial was that of Mrs. Grace Kephart, for many years the leading soprano in the choir. How many duets and quartets she took part in, and how many solos she sang for church services, weddings, and other occasions is unknown.

At the opening of the church in 1915, Mr. J. Gurney Briggs became director of music, and Mrs. Robert Crewes of Thomasville was organist until 1919. At the opening service in Wesley Memorial Mrs. J.J. Farriss sang the first solo.

In 1919 Mr. Briggs went to Charleston as director of music at St. Michaels Church, and Mr. Dan Smith became both director and organist. He held this position until his resignation in 1925 to become organist in another church in High Point.

In that same year Mr. Briggs came back to High Point and was again employed as director of music, a position which he held until 1947. Mrs. Bascom Whitaker of Oak Ridge came as organist, also in that year. She is the sister of Mrs. W.C. Jones, an active and faithful member of the congregation from about 1902 to the present time.

Mr. Briggs gave faithful service for over 20 years and was responsible for many beautiful programs in the church. His magnificent tenor voice was constantly in demand for solos on many occasions. Mrs. Whitaker continued as organist for 25 years.

In 1947 Miss Mildred Crowder came to High Point from Goldsboro, where she had been directing the choir at the First Baptist Church. Miss Crowder directed Wesley Memorial choir until 1954. In addition to being an excellent conductor, Miss Crowder had a beautiful soprano voice which added much to the choir, and was greatly enjoyed by the congregation where she sang solos.

After Mrs. Whitaker resigned in 1952, Mrs. Randolph Phillips from Greensboro was organist for about two years.

In 1954 Mr. Howard Coble, from Guilford College, came as director of choirs, and Dr. Carroll Feagins, a professor of psychology at Guilford College, became organist. Mrs.

Charles McAnally for a number of years had served as assistant organist and now also holds a position as organist.

Dr. Feagins is a master organist and Mrs. McAnally is both organist and a skilled and talented pianist. Special musical programs are beautifully supported and greatly enhanced by Dr. Feagins at the organ and Mrs. McAnally at the piano.

Mr. Coble is greatly beloved by his choirs and the congregation, and is unexcelled as a director. He has a beautiful tenor voice, and the congregation is always delighted and moved by the beauty of his voice and the sincere Christian interpretation of his solos. Mr. Coble is a young man – soon after he came to High Point he was married to Miss Kitty Miller, daughter of Walter J. Miller, pastor at that time. There is no doubt that Mr. Coble will continue to grow in his musical career. He is much in demand here and elsewhere as soloist for weddings and other special programs.

Many items of musical interest have accumulated through the years.

Members of the Sunday school about 1920 will remember that Miss Clara Boyd was the pianist of Sunday school at that time and also was leader of an orchestra that played for various meetings. Miss Mae Kirkman was leading the singing in Sunday school.

Mae Kirkman has been a supply organist, also, for many years, and has played for many weddings and special events. Her ability as an organist and her cheerful willingness to help whenever she is needed endear her to the congregation.

A note of interest in a bulletin for 1921 states that there were more sopranos than altos in the choir, and adds that Mr. Dan Smith, director and voice teacher in town, is offering

a scholarship to an alto singer if she will join his choir.

On March 13, 1921, the choir under Dan Smith's direction gave an Easter cantata, and listed as singers were: Sopranos: Mrs. R.T. Amos, Miss Mabel Boyd, Miss Agnes Dodson, Mrs. Velva Hayden, Miss Vera King, Miss Frances Peacock, Miss Helen Reynolds, Mrs. Robert H. Sechrest, Miss Blanche Stoneham, Miss Ruth Sechrest, Miss Nellie Muse, and Miss Vera Idol; Altos: Miss Evelyn Boyd and Mrs. Lena Waynick; Tenors: C.J. Davis, W.P. Davis, Ernest Welch; Basses: Bert Kirkman, John Peacock, Robert Sechrest, and Earl Smith.

In the beginning, the choir loft was elevated several feet higher than it is at the present time, and about 1922, it was lowered to its present level. At the same time the organ was repaired and renovated by an expert from the Austin Company, and was reported in "wellnigh perfect condition."

In the Thirties the choirs were doing excellent work under the guidance of Mr. Gurney Briggs. In 1931 choir vestments were bought – 24 choir gowns, 15 black velvet choir caps, and 15 soft white collars. Many will remember the controversy which arose over having a vested choir; some felt that it was not in keeping with the simplicity of early Methodism. However, only a few appearances convinced everybody of the improvement over varied colored dresses and hats of the women, and the general air of worship which the uniformity of attire created.

In 1931 Mrs. Sidney Gayle assisted Mr. Briggs in organizing a junior choir, and in 1939 Mrs. Charles McAnally and Mr. Briggs organized a young people's choir.

In 1936 Miss Clarice Bowman assisted Mr. Briggs in presenting a Christmas pageant,

and in 1937, with Mr. Briggs and his choirs to furnish the musical setting, Mr. Wallace Fridy, associate minister, with the assistance of Mrs. Edith Sherrod, Miss Margaret Andrews, Miss Frances Gordon Lindsay, and Mrs. F.P. Ingram presented another pageant of the Christmas story.

Two of the leading musical events of Wesley Memorial church for twenty years have been the singing of Handel's "The Messiah" at the Christmas season and Mendelssohn's "The Elijah" at Easter. Every one remembers the magnificent performances of both this year (1960) under the direction of Mr. Coble with Dr. Feagins and Mrs. McAnally as accompanists. A capacity congregation was present, and never was an audience more deeply moved than during the singing of the solos by guest artists, and the choruses by the choirs, culminating in the triumphant and reverent "Hallelujah" chorus.

The first mention of these performances was in 1940 when Mr. Briggs directed the Wesley Memorial choir with many other singers from other choirs in High Point in the two oratorios. One hundred and twenty-five singers took part. At the performance of "The Messiah," over 1,000 were turned away from the church for lack of room.



Paul Hardin, Jr. 1945-1949

When Miss Mildred Crowder came in 1947 during the pastorate of Dr. Paul Hardin (1945-1949) the musical program was being expanded. For many years the custom of paying a small salary to soloists in the choir had been followed. Now the whole choir was established

on a voluntary basis. The organization of the youth choirs as they are maintained today was begun; a Carol choir for children for the first and second grades; Carillon, for third, fourth, and fifth grades; Cecelian, for sixth,

seventh, and eighth grades; Chapel, for senior high students; and the Chancel choir for adults.

The Chapel choir furnishes music for the vesper services on Sunday, which are conducted by members of the Methodist Youth Fellowship group.

Since Mr. Coble came in 1954, he has greatly strengthened every phase of the musical program. His Chancel choir has outgrown the space in the choir loft, and on special occasions has occupied chairs on the pulpit platform. The choir sings some of the greatest anthems of old masters and new composers, and leaves the congregation moved by the deep religious sincerity with which they interpret the anthems, as well as by the musical skill with which they perform. Many choirs of larger churches in larger cities do not sing so well.

When the five choirs unite for a special service on various occasions, their music thrills the congregation.

Two other special events should be singled out for special notice.

On June 1, 1947, Dr. and Mrs. Fred Aden from Ward College, Buenos Aires, Argentina, former missionary specials of Wesley Memorial were in High Point for a short visit on their way to California, where they plan to spend their years of retirement. The Official Board and their wives – 100 in all – gave a dinner in their honor at the Sheraton Hotel. For entertainment a quartet composed of Tommy Miller, N.M. Harrison, Jr., Bob Padgett and Howard Coble sang.

At the vesper hour, on October 13, 1957, a hymn festival was held in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great hymn writer, Charles Wesley. A choir composed of all the Methodist choirs in the

city participated in the program. Choir and congregation joined in singing some of the well known and beloved hymns of Charles Wesley. No account of music in Wesley Memorial church would be complete without a comment on the congregational singing, Dr. Herbert calls the church "a singing congregation"; the people seem to love to sing, and this part of the service is entered into with singular devotion and religious fervor.



Chapter 15 Memorial Chapel in Main Street Wesley Memorial

A great need was felt in Wesley Memorial for a chapel which could be used for small weddings, christenings, special prayer and consecration services, and other services for small groups of people. In 1947 the W.S.C.S. assumed the responsibility for such a room.

Money had been laid aside by the women to be used to furnish a ladies' parlor. Mrs. H.A. Millis was president of W.S.C.S. in 1946, and at the meeting in August of that year, it was decided to use this money for the project of the chapel. This amount would not cover the cost, but with their customary resourcefulness they set to work to make more money.

From the annual bazaar and turkey dinner in the fall the women cleared \$1,248.40, and \$323.77 from the turnip green dinner in the spring. From other sources they collected \$3,671.22. The Wesleyan Service Guild gave them \$50.00. The total came to \$5,243.39.

The church assigned a room on the first floor on the north side of the Wesley Fellowship room, and a committee was appointed from the W.S.C.S. to have charge of the rebuilding and redecorating the room. This committee consisted of Mrs. R.T. Amos, Chairman, Mrs. H.A. Millis, Mrs. J.E. Horney, Mrs. J.C. Moore, and Mrs. O.E. Kearns.

Architects Voorhees and Everhart designed the chapel and contracted R.K. Stewart and Son to build it. Construction began early in the fall of 1947 when Mrs. A.M. Utley was president of the W.S.C.S., and was completed almost a year later when Mrs. Alma McCain was president.

Much thought and investigation was given to the colors of walls and wood, and

draperies and carpet were chosen to create a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere. The finishing and furnishing throughout is of oak with antique finish, except the organ console which is walnut finished in gray to blend with the gray finish of the walls. The floor is covered wall-to-wall with a dark red carpet. The windows are leaded in assorted hues of light marine and antique pastel shades. All lighting is indirect. The chapel seats 54 people.

The organ console is on the south side of the altar which is raised a step above the floor of the Chapel and separated from it by an altar rail. The altar is decorated with symbolic carvings. The lectern stands on the north side of the altar. Entrance to the altar is from the center.

The total cost of the Chapel was \$7,656.06. A part of this cost was assumed by individuals and groups. The total cost to the W.S.C.S. was \$5,093.00, which was raised and paid in two years.

The organ was a gift from Mr. E.D. Steele in memory of his wife. Everybody knew her tireless and consecrated work in the early years of the church, and were happy about this memorial to her. Including the cost of the organ, the whole cost was \$9.938.00

Mrs. L.C. Matton was the first organist in the Chapel in 1948, and has played the organ at almost every service held in the Chapel since that time. Annual Conference was in session when the Chapel was opened, and while the ladies were serving coffee to the visitors, pastor, Dr. Paul Hardin, asked Mrs. Matton to play some soft music on the organ. That was a lovely introduction of the organ to the congregation and the visitors, and Mrs. Matton's sympathetic and intelligent interpretation of the hymns and compositions she plays add to the sacred atmosphere that prevails in the Chapel.

The dedicatory service was conducted by Bishop Costen B. Harrell on Sunday morning, September 26, 1948, at eight o'clock A.M., and was broadcast over WMFR. The Chapel had been in use since August 29.

Mrs. McCain made the presentation: "As president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, and in behalf of that group of women, I now publicly present this Chapel to be dedicated to the glory of God and to the inspiration of the souls of men."

Bishop Harrell: "By what name shall this chapel be known?"

Mrs. McCain: "It shall be called 'Memorial Chapel."

A short, simple, but beautiful and suitable dedication it was, with appropriate hymns and prayers.

All furnishings of the chapel are gifts – most of them memorials. The largest single gift was the organ.

Mr. and Mrs. T.A. Tilden gave Cathedral Chimes as a memorial to their son, William Thomas Tilden, killed in action in World War II. Another son, Ralph Tilden, played the organ for the dedicatory service.

Other gifts were:

- Bible Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Matton Hymn Books – Mr. and Mrs. R.T. Amos
- 2. Book of Worship Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Hall
- 3. Two offering plates Mr. and Mrs. H.F. Hunsucker
- 4. Two vases Susannah Wesley Sunday School Class
- 5. Cross Wesleyan Service Guild
- 6. Chair Woman's Wesley Bible Class

- 7. One candlestick Mrs. S.C. Kirkman in memory of W.D. Brooks
- 8. One candlestick Grace, Clara, Shubal and Margie Kirkman in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Kirkman
- Pulpit Mrs. and Mrs. W.J. Fraley in memory of William J. Fraley, Jr, first Wesley Memorial boy killed in World War II
- Altar J.R. Peacock and Mrs. Everett Marsh – in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Dred Peacock
- 11. Baptismal Font Mrs. Kathleen Young Foy in memory of H. Fields Young
- 12. Bulletin Board in memory of Maxey J. Crowder
- 13. Short pew Mrs. J.E. Millis memorial to W.D. Brooks
- 14. Short pew Mrs. W.D. Brooks memorial to W.D. Brooks
- Long pew W.A. and Mrs. Stanton Sherrod – memorial to Mrs. W.A.
 Stanton and Stanton Sherrod
- 16. Long pew Dr. T.M. and David Stanton– memorial to Dr. and Mrs. D.A.Stanton
- Long pew Mrs. Ed Herring, Mrs.
 Henry Newbold, Mrs. Watson, Mrs.
 Morrow and W.A. Sherrod memorial to A. Sherrod
- 18. Long pew Mrs. Delk Smith, Frank, Braxton, Rachel Wall and daughter out of town – memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wall
- 19. Long pew Mrs. Elizabeth S. Best, Geddie and Sam Strickland, memorial to Mr. and Mrs. R.B. Strickland
- 20. Long pew Mrs. H.A. Millis– memorial to (Mother) Mrs. FloraSharpe Lewis
- 21. Long pew Mrs. O.C. Durland memorial to Oscar C. Durland
- 22. Long pew Mrs. J.R. Peacock memorial to Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Mann
- 23. Long pew Mrs. Angie Pitts and W.T. Powell memorial to (mother) Mrs. Mary S. Powell

24. Long pew – Mrs. Randall Mann, Mabel Tate, Mrs. Edmund Shoup – memorial to Mr. and Mrs. F.N. Tate.

The forward to the brochure published and distributed at the time of the dedication reflects the worshipful spirit of the chapel:

"Memorial Chapel is open throughout the day for your personal spiritual enrichment. Let all who enter do so in a spirit of prayer. Let the quiet and reverent beauty of this small sanctuary permeate your entire being. Let the sound of falling waters of the fountain (the Pandora Fraser Fountain, just outside the room, given by Mr. H.W. Fraser as a memorial to his wife) become for you a symbol of the cleansing and refreshing power of the stream of Life itself which flows from the heart of God. Let the soft light which falls from tinted panes bring color and warmth to your soul. Let the candles on the altar remind you of the light which is truly the Light of the World. Let the carved Agnus Dei, the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, which is on the altar's front, bring

to your mind the thought that He who came bringing Light into the world triumphed even over the darkness of death itself and lives to bring peace and comfort to your soul. Tarry in His presence; Abide in that peace as you go forth from this Holy Piace."

The chapel may be entered from a walk alongside the north side of the Sanctuary. The door opening on an open porch is kept unlocked from 9 to 5 each day, and a bulletin board at the entrance near the street invites passersby to come in for rest and meditation and prayer.

It is a much used room and will continue to hold many sacred memories in years to come. Many infants have been christened, many lovely small weddings solemnized, prayer meetings and communion services held – whatever the occasion, the peace and solemnity with which it was dedicated breathes upon the occasion. It is a sacred place.





Memorial Chapel, in the Main Street building.

Chapter 16 Gifts and Memorials in Wesley Memorial on Main Street

For forty-five years Wesley Memorial Church on North Main Street has been a consecrated and beloved center of religious life to its members, and countless sacred associations have formed ties that will linger always in heart and memory, long after the building itself is gone.

Most of these ties are inner things of the spirit that have no tangible form, bonds that have had their beginning in years of childhood, and become stronger and more lasting as the years went by.

In many cases those who have dedicated their lives and services to God through Wesley Memorial Church have passed on to that greater congregation that sings eternal praises around the throne of God. But they have left loved ones in the church who, when a need arose, found happiness in honoring those who were gone, by contributing to the need in the name of father, mother, child, or other relationship, and so have created a roster of consecrated men and women of yesterday and today.

Windows of stained glass adorn the sanctuary of the church, and most of these windows became memorials to men and women who had had a prominent part in the early history of the church.

On the North side of the church are six windows. From front to back they are memorials to:

- 1. Rose Pegrees Thompson (wife of Rev. J.E. Thompson) and
- 2. Rev. J.E. Thompson, Pastor (1907-1910)

- 3. Rev. Franklin Harriss Wood, D.D., 1836-1913, Father of Mrs. R.K. Stewart
- 4. Elizabeth Lindsay Jones, 1844-1898 and
- 5. Dr. William Oliver Jones, 1831-1911, parents of Mrs. W.C. Beavens
- 6. S. Martitia Farabee, 1936-1910

On the South side, from front to back:

- Julius W. Harriss, 1866-1921, father of J. Welch Harriss and Mrs. Elizabeth H. Covington.
- 2. No inscription
- Jonathan P. Redding, 1855-1914, father of Charles Redding of High Point and Lyman Redding of Front Royal, Virginia
- 4. Seborn Perry, 1819-1895 and
- 5. Mary J. Perry, 1831-1913, parents of the late Seborn Perry, Jr., Mrs. L.J. Ingram and Mrs. Minnie Vail
- 6. Emma Jarrell Simmons (Mrs. W.D., Sr.) mother of Frank Simmons and Pauline Wertz.
- 7. No inscription
- 8. No inscription

One of the oldest memorials in the church consists of two tables with scroll work that were given to Washington Street Church by Mr. Will Tate (brother of F.N. Tate). They were made by Snow Lumber Co., and are now in the intermediate Sunday school room. Also the pulpit stand in the intermediate room was bought for Washington Street Church.

In 1921, the fountain on the North side of the church grounds was given by Mr. H.W. Frazer as a memorial to his wife. A bronze tablet bears the inscription: "The Pandora Frazer Memorial Fountain. Erected by H.W. Frazer."

On July 31, 1927 a vase was placed on the pulpit which had been donated by the Ladies Aid Society in memory of Miss Venetia Smith.

Acousticans were placed in the sanctuary, a gift from the J.H. Adams family.

With money left in the treasury when the Ladies Aid disbanded about January 12, 1930, the members purchased and presented to Wesley Memorial Church a sterling silver water set, a baptismal font, and 6 walnut offering plates. They were used for the first time on October 19, 1930.

On March 2, 1924 a communion service, presented to Wesley Memorial Church by H.A. Millis, J.E. Millis, and Mrs. Sallie Millis Armfield in memory of their parents Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Millis, was used for the first time. The service consisted of 12 trays, 2 bases, and 2 covers. The cover to one of the stacks of trays bears the engraved inscription:

"Presented to Wesley Memorial Church in loving memory of J. Henry Millis and Cornelia White Millis by H.A. Millis, J.E. Millis, and Sallie Millis Armfield, March 2, 1924."

In August 1929, a half block of vacant lots were given to Wesley Memorial Church by Mr. O.A. Kirkman. They were deeded back to O.A. Kirkman, Jr., in June 1941.

In June 1935 two tall white vases were given to the church by Mrs. Samuel Hyman

In 1936 fire escapes were built as a memorial to James L. Ragan, brother of Mrs. G.H. Kearns, paid for by a bequest left to the church by Mr. Ragan.

In December 1936, an electric cross designed by Mr. H.J. Rockwell, was given by Mr. and Mrs. R.O. Lindsay in memory of William Ernest Gordon, brother of Mrs. Lindsay.

In memory of their son Edward, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Millis set up a memorial fund. Each year the children graduating from the

primary department to the junior department of Sunday school are presented with Bibles.

In September 1938, a pulpit Bible was given to the church by Rev. W.H. Townsend, and two sets of pulpit falls and markers were also given by Mr. Townsend.

A walnut desk and chair used by the church treasurer belonged to Dr. Dred Peacock, and after his death was given to the church by his son, John R. Peacock in March 1939.

In 1937 Charles L. Kearns installed hymn book racks in the balcony; J.W. Lindsay redecorated the church office; and W.T. Powell largely refurnished the office, giving desks, chairs and book cases.

In October 1940 an electric bulletin board was given to the church as a memorial to M.J. Crowder. It was paid for by individual and class donations.

Also in 1940 the Church Equipment Committee had the organ completely reworked, and gave a set of altar linens for the communion service. This was done also as an honor to Maxey J. Crowder, long chairman of the church property committee.

About this same time the Church Equipment Committee had the alley paved, a new furnace installed in the educational building, the parsonage painted, and shrubbery replanted on the church lawn. A note is made that the church is now completely out of debt for the first time in many years.

In March 1942, Mr. E.D. Steele gave to the Women's Society for the church an electric refrigerator and a gas stove.

In this same year, Mr. and Mrs. R.T. Amos gave to the church a dish-washing machine.

Also in 1942, W.T. Powell gave to the church 250 costumer hooks.

In World War II, Wesley Memorial sent many of its young men and some of its young women to serve in the various branches of military service, and eleven of them gave their lives for their country.

For those who paid the supreme price a plaque bearing their names was set up on the front wall on the south side of the church. The following names appeared:

William Hurley Davis, Jr.
William J. Fraley, Jr.
Miles A. Gayle
Edward T. Harrison
Mary Duncan McAnally
E. Byron Meador, Jr.
Thomas English Ring
William D. Simmons, III
William Thomas Tilden
Charles C. Upshaw
Robert James Smith

A number of memorials were given by the family or friends of these heroic men and women. As a memorial to all the men in service in May 1942, the adult classes of the Sunday school gave the two speakers' stands that are used in the vestibules, and a little later in the same year the whole adult division of the Sunday school gave two guest registry desks, dedicated to our boys in service.

In addition to the pulpit in the chapel, Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Fraley also gave as a memorial to their son William J. Fraley, New Testaments with the name and the United States flag on the cover to every Wesley Memorial member who enlisted in the service.

Other gifts to the church included: Silver flower urns by Mr. and Mrs. Phil Warner.

Several pictures:

Portraits of John and Charles Wesley painted by T. Emile Dodamead.

"The Last Supper" given by R.C. Boyce. This picture hangs in the chapel.

"The Last Supper" presented by Charles Long, Mary Elizabeth and Alexandra Casey, and paid for by the Alexander family. This picture hangs in Wesley Hall

"Christ Knocking at the Door" given by Mr. Frank Williams to honor Mrs. Alma McCain, to be hung in the Junior High class room.

In 1947 Dr. M.A. Lackey gave three pulpit robes and hoods, designating that one was given to the pastor, Dr. Paul Hardin.

In the fall of 1953, the W.S.C.S. with Mrs. W.B. Hall as president bought new dining room furniture for the parsonage. Mrs. Forrest Murray gave a bedroom suite, newly refinished by Mr. W.T. Powell at Myrtle Desk Co. The Society also sponsored a project to raise money for a car to be a Christmas present for Thornie White, faithful sexton for many years.

For several years as decorations of the altar for the Easter service, families have placed Easter lilies as memorials to loved ones or to honor the living. In 1960 the arrangement was especially lovely. It consisted of 73 plants. Nine were in honor of living and 64 in memory of past members of the church.

One of the most interesting of the gifts is an original letter from John Wesley written in 1776.

In the summer of 1959, pastor Dr. C. Herbert, Jr. of Wesley Memorial and Dr. Arthur R. Ankers from Beckminster Methodist Church at Wolverhampton, England, exchanged pulpits for five weeks. The congregation will always remember the inspiring and deeply spiritual sermons of Dr. Ankers. He and Mrs. Ankers left a lasting impression on all who came to know them.

On September 13, 1959, Dr. Herbert received from Dr. Ankers this letter which had hung in his church, with the request that it be placed in the new church.

The letter was written to John Mason, Asst. (supt.) at Whitehaven. Wesley was at Liverpool on April 10. The letter has to do with the building of a chapel. A delay of a year, then City Road Chapel was built.

The letter is in Wesley's own handwriting. It says:

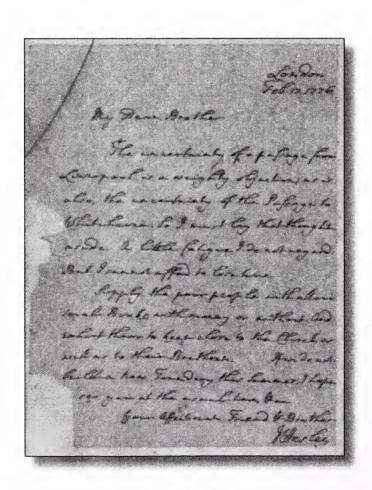
My dear Brother,

The uncertainty of a passage from Liverpool is a weighty objection, as is also the uncertainty of the passage to Whitehaven. So I must lay that thought aside. A little fatigue I do not regard, But I cannot afford to lose time.

Supply the poor people with all our small books, with money or without. And exhort them to keep a love to the Church, as well as to their brethren. If we do not build a new Foundry this summer, I hope to see you at the usual time, and am

Your affectionate Friend and Brother John Wesley (Reached Whitehaven May 1)





Chapter 17 Interesting Events Through The Years

Through the years many more or less unrelated events have occurred which are woven into the life of the church. Every pastor and almost every member could contribute from his own memory and experiences, occurrences that would make a volume of interesting reading.

Only a comparatively small number from relatively recent years are included here.

1903: The first record of the meeting of the Western North Carolina Conference in Washington Street Church. Again in 1912 it was held there, and in 1921, 1929 and 1948 in Wesley Memorial Church. Since 1957 it has been held at Lake Junaluska in June instead of the fall.

1919: The first telephone was installed in the church. No. 828.

1921: A mass meeting was held in the auditorium of South Main Street school to discuss the possibility of securing a Methodist Protestant College here (High Point College opened in 1924).

1923: The church gave Dr. E.K. McLarty, pastor, a new Hudson car at Thanksgiving.

1925: A movement was set up to make this church known as "the strangers' church." A committee consisting of W.B.



Emmett K. McLarty 1922-1926

McEwen, J.R. Kirkman, V.A.J. Idol, and J.E. Marsh was appointed to greet strangers at the close of the service.

In 1960 the same desire to make visitors known led to placing cards in the pews with a tiny red ribbon attached to them. Visitors were invited to fill out the cards and pin on the bows so that members could recognize them as visitors and greet them.

1931: On October 26 the parsonage at 202 Hillcrest Drive was purchased.

1931-1933: G. Ray Jordan was pastor. He came to High Point as a very young man with his beautiful and adored wife, Caroline, and two small children. He was so young that one of the elder women in the congregation affectionately referred to him as "that young-un."

The Hillcrest Drive parsonage was made ready for occupancy, and he and his family moved from the parsonage on Washington Street to the new one. He remembers with much gratitude the kindness of the women of the church, especially Mrs. J.H. Adams and Mrs. O.E. Kearns who were kind and helpful to his wife in the task of moving.

His pastorate came during the years of depression. To support the mission specials, \$10,000 had to be raised. He pays special tribute to the late W.T. Powell, one of Wesley Memorial's consecrated and faithful members, who headed a committee, and "accomplished the impossible" by raising the full amount.

Dr. Jordan's third book *The Intolerance of Christianity* was published while he was here. His seventeenth book *Religion That Is Eternal* was just off the press in 1960 while he was holding pre-Easter services at Wesley Memorial.

Dr. Jordan states that in those early years of his pastorate he learned that the "philosophy of living was related to helping people." At the end of three years the Annual Conference of Western North Carolina Conference sent Dr. Jordan to Centenary Church in Winston-Salem. The church grieved over his going, but with true Methodist philosophy welcomed back a former pastor, Dr. W.A. Lambeth.

1933: Mr. H.C. Kearns and Mr. E.J. Gurley were the only octogenarians in the congregation. In 1960 a son of Mr. H.C. Kearns, our honored Mr. G.H. Kearns, a member since 1886, is among that number; also W.W. Snider, faithful member since 1895, and Mr. Charles S. Welborn, secretary of the Sunday School since 1907. To Mr. C.A. Ring, father of C.A. Ring, Jr., an active official and faithful usher, goes the distinction of being the oldest member. He is in his 91st year. Mrs. George T. Wood, Sr., whose sons are leaders in the congregation, is another faithful member.

1934: On June 10, Rev. S.H. Hilliard came from Sylva to preach on the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate, 1894-1897. A little later Rev. E.H. Davis, who was the first pastor after High Point became a station (1887-1890), preached, and on September 3, Rev. T.A. Smoot, pastor in 1897, after Mr. Hilliard was forced to leave on account of illness.

1935: The High Point Enterprise for December 8 gave these interesting figures: High Point has 15,951 church members; the population is 42,000. The Methodist Episcopal is largest, 3,515; then the Baptists;

next, Methodist Protestants.
Wesley Memorial has 1,929
members; Green Street
Baptist, 1,215; First Baptist,
1,200; Methodist Protestant,
733; South Main Street
Methodist, 500. One-fourth
of the church members
are Negroes; Baptist, the
largest, Methodist 900.



Embree H. Blackard 1936-1941

1937: In the spring of this year the radio was secured for the morning service.

In **1944:** The church signed for another 5 years on the radio, with an option for ten years.

1937: During the months of July and August Dr. Embree H. Blackard, pastor, attended the World Conference on Faith and Order in Edinburgh.

1937: The church voted especial thanks to Mrs. W.D. Brooks for the faithfulness she had shown in performing many duties, collecting pledges, and other services. Mrs. Brooks worked quietly and unostentatiously, but the church had no more faithful member.

1938: In celebration of the John Wesley Aldersgate Commemoration, P.E. Lindley, beloved late professor of religion and Dean of High Point College, spoke on "Remembering Aldersgate."

1938: For the Wednesday evening services the following monthly assignments were made: (1) the church family; (2) school; (3) recreation; (4) evangelism. In 1957, Family night suppers were inaugurated for the Wednesday night meetings. Following the suppers, study groups met; three for adults, and one for young people. In 1959, two adult groups met, and groups for primary, intermediate, and junior high. The senior high students held their choir practice at this time.

1938: An iron fireman was installed in both the Sunday school building and the Sanctuary. Railings were added to the steps and furniture was bought for the pastor's study. A resale of the old parsonage property was made to Mr. E.D. Steele.

In September a large renovation program was completed after services had been held in the Sunday school building for six weeks. The building was re-roofed, windows releaded, walls re-plastered and stippled in soft

colors, woodwork done over, organ repaired and organ pipes refinished, new covers on radiators, new felt-padded carpet, choir loft lowered, new pulpit Bible with drops and markers (memorial gifts). The Sunday school rooms were repainted and redecorated, and new equipment was set up in the dining room and kitchen.

The committee in charge of the renovation was: R.T. Amos, chairman, J.E. Millis, M.J. Crowder, W.B. McEwen, John R. Peacock, W.E. Mitchell, Mrs. W.C. Idol, Mrs. O.E. Kearns, Mrs. H.A. Millis, Mrs. J.F. Hayden, Mrs. R. Amos, and Mrs. Willis H. Slane.

1939: The High Point Enterprise for June 13 announced that Dr. Blackard was one of ten ministers being sent abroad with the program of interchange of preachers and speakers between churches of Great Britain and America. The Board of Stewards of Wesley Memorial Church granted his leave of absence. He is to preach at the American Church in Paris on July 30; Berlin, August 6; Glasgow, August 27 (Jowett's Church). He will return on September 11.

1940: Six outstanding sermons on six successive Sunday evenings were preached by college presidents in the area on the subject: "If I Had Only One Message to Bring."

- (1) Dr. W.P. Few from Duke University
- (2) Dr. Walter B. Lingle, Davidson College
- (3) Dr. Howard Rondthaler, Salem College
- (4) Dr. Frank Graham, University of North Carolina
- (5) Dr. Clyde Milner, Guilford College
- (6) Dr. G.I. Humphreys, High Point College.

1941: A list of twenty of the older mothers of the congregation was printed. In 1960 Mrs. Effie B. Young, mother of Jessie May Young, treasurer of the city schools, and Miss Ruth Young, is still a faithful attendant at the Sunday services.

1941: On October 31 Dr. C. Excelle Rozzelle came as pastor of Wesley Memorial Church with his gracious wife and small daughter Caroline. His pastorate exactly coincided with the years of World War II, which brought into the church the problems, hardships, and tragedies that people everywhere were having to face. Records show that around 200 men and women from the congregation were in the armed services, eleven of whom did not come back.

Repairs were being made on the parsonage, so the Rozzelles spent the first ten days of their pastorate in the gracious home of the W.C. Idols at 210 Hillcrest Drive. These days laid the foundation for a firm and lasting friendship which has brought joy to both families.



C. Excelle Rozzelle 1941-1945

Dr. Rozzelle recalls the strenuous days of those four years, filled with almost countless speeches and sermons, drives, visits to anxious and bereaved homes; years with no vacations, but filled with great Christian joy of service. In 1942 he was not absent a single time from the pulpit, a first time and a record, he remembers; and in the quarterly conference of April 19, 1943, he reported that the first part of this year was "the most fruitful six months in his entire ministry."

1945: Dr. Paul Hardin came as pastor, with his lovely young wife and three children, one of whom – Betsy – now Mrs. Arthur M. Utley, Jr., is one of the active young workers in the congregation. The two sons turned to the profession of law, Paul III a professor at Duke University, and Edward a recent graduate from the law school at Duke.

Now in 1960 Wesley Memorial Church, along with all other Methodists, only with greater love and appreciation because of his years here, congratulate Bishop Hardin upon his elevation on July 17 to the episcopacy. No preacher in the church more richly deserves this honor, or will serve with more Christian humility, power, and efficiency. He is a great preacher and a true Christian leader.

During the early years of his pastorate at Wesley Memorial, the sanctuary was again renovated and redecorated, and in 1947 Dr. Hardin said of it: "Our church auditorium has become a lovely sanctuary of worship."

1953: In this year Mrs. W.L. Watson resigned from her office as secretary and treasurer of the church, which she had held since 1926. The church as a whole paid tribute to her faithfulness and efficiency, and Charles McAnally, as chairman of the Official Board, presented her a television set as a token of their appreciation of her "devoted and faithful services."

1956: By action of the Western North Carolina Conference to meet in June 1957 at Lake Junaluska, the conference year was shortened to nine months. Rev. Walter J. Miller, pastor since 1953, came back to serve a fifth term of the short year.

An item of interest covering all the years since the early pastorate of Dr. W.A. Lambeth is a compilation of the number of new members during the terms of the individual pastors:

W.A. Lambeth 4 years 493 members 4 years 468 members E.K. McLarty J.W. Moore 4 years 778 members 3 years 516 members G. Ray Jordan W.A. Lambeth 3 years 306 members 5 years 777 members E.H. Blackard C.E. Rozzelle 4 years 492 members W. Arthur Kale 4 years 520 members Walter J. Miller 5 years 631 members C.C. Herbert, Jr. 5 years 330 members (continuing pastor)

1957: Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr. came as pastor to Wesley Memorial Church with his charming wife and two children. Mrs. Herbert (they are "Ches" and "Libba" to all their friends), gifted and gracious, shares her talents of song and leadership generously with the church and community. Their daughter Libba is an outstanding student at Duke University, and their son "Trudge" (C.C. Herbert III) is making a splendid record in High Point High School.



C. C. Herbert, Jr. 1957-1963

Dr. Herbert is greatly loved by his congregation. His sermons reach the minds and hearts of his hearers; as pastor, he ministers wisely and tirelessly to all who need his help or guidance and comfort; his sincere and consecrated Christian character inspires

confidence; and his skill and wisdom as leader of the church are invaluable in the big adventure of building the new church.



Chapter 18 The Fourth New Church: Its Beginning

The first mention in the records of a new church was on December 2, 1951. At a quarterly conference held on that date, Dr. Arthur Kale, pastor, announced his decision to give up active work as a pastor and join the faculty of the School of Religion at Duke University.

In his final message as pastor he suggested enterprises which he should be happy to see Wesley Memorial undertake. The first one on the list was the need for a new church building.

There had been frequent informal discussions of a building program, but no definite decision had been arrived at. Some members favored remodeling the present building; others felt that a new plant on a new location would be better.

Two of those who were in favor of the new location were R.T. Amos, one of the most active, generous, and consecrated members of the congregation, and realtor Curtis Smithdeal, devoted member of the church and official board, and prominent leader in the activities of the church. In his work as realtor, Mr. Smithdeal was acquainted with real estate in and around High Point, so he and Mr. Amos quietly began to investigate possible sites. Mr. Smithdeal's knowledge of real estate, and his familiarity with such transactions were invaluable to the church in finding and acquiring the site for the new church and, with the approval of the Board, an option on the present site was secured. It should be noted that neither Mr. Smithdeal nor his company had any interest in the land purchased.



Walter J. Miller 1952-1957

It was about a year later, on January 11, 1953, while Rev. Walter J. Miller was pastor, that Charles W. McAnally presented to the Official Board and moved the acceptance of a resolution to purchase from Delos Hedgecock and J.B. Lovelace a tract of 17-1/2

acres on Chestnut Street Extension at United States Highway 29/70, for \$30,000 cash. The motion was seconded by W.B. Hall, and was passed with one dissenting vote by James H. Burnley, II, president of the Adult Fellowship.

A second resolution presented by Mr. McAnally was to purchase from Herbert Hedgecock an adjoining tract of 378 feet frontage on Chestnut Street [now Drive] with a depth of 160 feet, for \$12,250 cash. This motion was seconded by R.T. Amos, and passed unanimously.

Earlier on December 23, 1952, the matter had been brought before the Official and Associate Boards, at which time the price asked for the second tract was \$15,000. By allowing the owner, Herbert Hedgecock, to reserve the right too move a house on the lot at the seller's expense, Mr. Smithdeal had been able to have the price reduced to \$12,250.

According to legal church proceeding, Dr. Herman S. Duncan said that a written statement must be prepared, giving the approval of the pastor, the District Superintendent, and the District Board of Location. Mr. Miller requested that the Board of Location meet before January 15, since the option expired on that date.

The Board continued its work throughout the spring and summer of 1953, and at the fourth quarterly conference held on August 10, Charles McAnally, Chairman of the Official Board, presented plans for building a new church on the newly acquired property, and, in accord with the request of the District Superintendent, a suggestion to hold a special session of the quarterly conference at 12 Noon on August 30, 1953 in the sanctuary.

The meeting was held at the time and place designated with Mr. Miller, pastor, presiding.

The letter from Dr. Duncan was read, stating:

"As Superintendent of Greensboro District, Methodist Church, I do hereby grant permission to Wesley Memorial Quarterly Conference and congregation to proceed with plans, specifications, contracts, and actual construction of a new church edifice to be erected on the new site recently purchased by them,...all of which action will be in line with the Disciplinary requirements of the Methodist Church."

A motion introduced by Mr. McAnally and seconded by J.W. Woollen, approving the resolution and authorizing the building of a new church on the Chestnut Street site, was passed.

Mr. R.R. Fountain made a motion, which was seconded by F.J. Sizemore, Sr., and passed, to appoint "The New Church Building Committee of Wesley Memorial Church." Mr. R.T. Amos was appointed as chairman of this committee and asked to select his own committee. The Committee, as selected by Mr. Amos, consisted of the following members: W.B. Hall, J.A. Johnson, Charles L. Kearns, J.E. Millis, Charles McAnally, Holt McPherson, W.T. Powell, and Curtis Smithdeal.

A motion by Dr. K.B. Geddie, seconded by Harry Bell and J.W. Woollen, resolved that a committee be appointed to make an estimate of the cost. This committee had as its chairman R.T. Amos and the same personnel as the previous committee. The committee was also empowered to employ architects, and R.T. Amos was empowered to execute agreement with the architect or architects. The minutes of the meeting were signed by Walter J. Miller, pastor; Mrs. Emily Crowe, secretary; and Mrs. Maxum Bingham, church treasurer.

Too high praise cannot be given to every member of the Building Committee and every other committee that has worked on the church from the beginning to the present. No sacrifice of time and effort has been too great to make for bringing the work to its successful culmination. Special commendation should be given to attorney Charles McAnally, who, at every step, has given meticulous attention to every legal aspect, to be certain that every detail was in order.

For many months until final plans were approved, the Sunday school leaders, with W.B. Hall as chairman and Harry Bell as vice-chairman, met frequently to discuss the needs of the educational building. Teachers and leaders in various classes and departments visited educational buildings in other towns, and studied plans followed by other churches, to be able to submit to the committee and architects suggestions that seemed to offer the best arrangement and equipment for the educational building in Wesley Memorial Church.

During this same period many other members of the Building Committee and other church leaders visited outstanding churches over North Carolina and other states, seeking the best ideas to be found in church architecture.

Charles L. Kearns and his committee studied chapels in other churches to bring back ideas to incorporate in the beautiful chapel in this church.

For a year many meetings were held by all committees and steps progressed to the next presentation to the congregation at the 11 A.M. service on September 19, 1954. Charles McAnally, chairman of the Official Board, presented the five-part program.

- 1. Resolved that Wesley Memorial build a new church on the new site.
- 2. Resolved that Wesley Memorial approve plans as submitted by the New Church Building Committee and Committee to Estimate Cost, and approve tentative plans drafted by the church's architects, Mr. Harold E. Wagoner and Mr. Charles C. Hartman, with the exception of the bowling alley and swimming pool which are to be deferred until they are approved by the congregation.
- 3. That the fund-raising campaign proceed using as counsel the firm of Marts and Lundy.
- 4. That the Building Committee be authorized to proceed with plans and specifications; to make changes; to let contracts.
- 5. If, after the fund raising campaign, the cash and tangible assets are not equal, the matter shall be submitted back to the congregation.

The next meeting was a congregational meeting called during the 11 A.M. service on October 24, 1954, with Mr. McAnally, presiding. The purpose of the meeting was to find out by a vote of the congregation whether to go forward with the new building. Mr. McAnally outlined the progress so far.

- 1. Purchase of the site on January 11, 1953.
- 2. On August 30, the Building Committee and the Committee to Estimate the Cost were appointed and were announced. Subcommittees to the number of 190 persons were later added to the original committees, and Wagner and Hartman

- were employed as architects.
- 3. On October 24, the congregation met to vote on the recommendation as brought in by the Committee. A week was set apart for everyone to examine a brochure of the proposed buildings, and to read the recommendations as printed in booklet form. The estimated cost was reported as \$1,641,105.00

Mr. McAnally announced that the Official Board and Building Committee had unanimously approved the resolution.

A motion for adoption was made by Tom Latimer, Jr., and seconded by Allen Welborn. It was adopted unanimously by a rising vote of the congregation.

At the next meeting a week later, a quarterly conference, on October 31, 1954, Mr.

McAnally explained that the church had been given 110 shares of common stock in the Emerywood Housing Operation, and had an opportunity to sell. It was moved by Curtis Smithdeal and seconded by John Peacock to sell to Emry C. Green or his nominee at \$335 per share.

At this meeting Shubal C. Kirkman was made official treasurer of the New Building Fund. The fund was to be deposited in the Wachovia Bank under the joint control of R.T. Amos, Chairman of the New Church Building Fund, and Shubal C. Kirkman. Special tribute should be paid to Mr. Kirkman for his untiring work on this difficult assignment and the absolute accuracy of his reports.

At the first quarterly conference in the new year, January 30, 1955, it was reported that a successful fund raising campaign had been conducted. Approximately one million dollars in cash and pledges had been received.

A report was made at the quarterly conference on July 18, 1956, that from July 18, 1955 to July 18, 1956, \$176,680.32 had been added to the Building Fund, and that an advanced payment of \$10,000 had been made to Harold E. Wagoner, Architect.

The church is deeply indebted to R.T.

Amos and his committee for the selection of Mr. Harold E. Wagoner of Philadelphia as architect. Mr. Wagoner is the leading designer of churches in America, and has received many awards for his work. His comment as he looked over the completed structure – completed except for the Sanctuary – that he considered this church his

masterpiece. Then he added, rather sadly, that this would probably be the last great Gothic church building in America, since church architecture was turning to the modern.

To have been working with Mr. Wagoner, Mr. Charles C. Hartman of Greensboro was a happy arrangement. The two men were in agreement, and since Mr. Hartman was so nearby, he could easily be called upon for a conference when necessary.



Chapter 19 The Plans Go Forward

At a special session of the Quarterly Conference on June 1, 1958, authorized by the District Superintendent Dr. J.C. Madison, he gave his approval to the first and second stages of working drawings of the church, except the Sanctuary; he authorized the New Church Building Committee to enter into contracts for construction; to consider the financial plan for defraying the cost of the new church.

The meeting then adjourned till 11 A.M. June 15, 1958.

Letter of consent from the pastor in charge of Wesley Memorial and the District Superintendent were as follows: Dr. Madison wrote:

Greensboro District Committee On Church Location and Building Report To Wesley Memorial Church

Greensboro District Committee on Church Location and Building Report has reviewed the plans of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church as presented. Units contemplated for immediate future (Educational Building and Chapel) cost of which is to be \$1,480.072.00, unanimously approved.

Further consideration of the financial statement indicating liquid assets and collectible pledges amounting to \$1,178,864.57, leaving a balance to be raised during the building period of \$233,958 leads us to believe that your system of financing the project is sound — especially so since a Building and Loan Association has made a written statement to lend the church \$300,000, if necessary. We therefore give our unanimous approval of the building program and consent for the

church to proceed immediately to enter into contract with its plans.

Signed, J. Clay Madison, Chm.

J.L. Pittard, Sec. Dated June 18, 1958

Others present: Max Hovey, C.C. Herbert, Jr. and Dale Montgomery

The letter from Dr. Herbert follows:

To Whom It May Concern:

Having carefully reviewed the plans, specifications, and financial program for the proposed new church building of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, High Point, North Carolina, which includes everything except the Sanctuary, I gladly give my consent as duly appointed pastor of this church for this building program.

Signed, Respectfully C.C. Herbert, Jr.

July 18, 1958

On June 13, 1958 a meeting was set for Sunday morning, June 15, 1958, when the contracts were to be considered for authorization by the congregation:

R.K. Stewart & Son, High Point, General Contractor \$1,052.275.00 W.H. Sullivan, Greensboro, **Plumbing Contractors** \$63,878.00 Air Conditioning Corporation, Greensboro Heating, Air Conditioning and Ventilating \$150,747.00 Bryant Electric Company, **High Point** \$89,122.00 Approved Fees for Architects, including Supervisors \$82,000.00 Cost of New Church Property (19 acres) \$ 42.250.00 Total \$1,480.072.00

Assets to apply on the above c including cash, property, no	•
including parsonage	
and collected pledges	\$1,246,114.00
Cash, property, and	
collected pledges	\$1,178,864.00
Paid to Architect	\$ 25,000.00
Paid for new church property	\$ 42,250.00
Balance to be obtained	\$ 233,958.00

Estimated collections which will need to be considered by church members at the completion of construction, February 1960

Chapel Furnishings	\$	21,600.00
Temporary Church	\$	39,200.00
Class Room and		
Office Furnishings	\$	50,000.00
Landscaping, including gra	ding,	
topsoil, parking areas, c	urbs,	
walks, lighting and store	n draii	ıs
	\$	246,800.00

On June 15, 1958, at quarterly conference, Mr. McAnally, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees again reviewed the development of the plans for the new church from the purchase of the site. Several items appeared in his report that have not been recorded here.

Four dinner meetings were held during October 1954, at which efforts were made to have every member of the church attend one meeting. The plans were explained, and in addition a brochure was assembled, printed, and mailed to every member of the church. Questions and discussion were encouraged.

On July 15, 1956, at a church conference, it was explained that to advance with the plan would necessitate an indebtedness. Notice was given to the New Church Building Committee to proceed and progress consistently with the construction and tangible assets. The first and second stage working drawings except the Sanctuary were available.

Bids had been received on May 21, 1958, as

shown above, and at a meeting on June 3, the decision was reached to eliminate non-essential plans and get the cost down to a minimum. Mr. Wagoner was present at this meeting and approved the bids.

The significance of this meeting warrants inclusion of the names of those present: Charles McAnally, Chairman; Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr., Pastor; Mrs. Maxum Bingham, Treasurer; Mrs. Emily Crowe, Secretary; N.M. Harrison, R.T. Amos, Mrs. J.W. Lindsay, Philip B. David, W.B. Hall, C.A. Ring, Jr., R.T. Amos, Jr., J.A. Johnson, Curtis Smithdeal, Miss Sarah Leake, A.W. Dunbar, Holt McPherson, W.R. Peters, Paul Stamey, Lynwood Smith, Dale Montgomery, J.T. Ferebee, Amos R. Kearns, W.H. Wininger, Edgar H. Snider, and Henderson Rogers.

The Building Committee with two absences, J.E. Millis and Elliott Wood; and two additions, Lynwood Smith and George W. Lyles, Jr.

A motion was made by Charles McAnally and seconded by Amos Kearns that the decision be adopted. The motion was passed unanimously.

At a meeting on September 13, 1959, a motion made by Charles McAnally and seconded by R.T. Amos was passed authorizing the Building Committee to enter into contract with R.D. Tilson and Associates, Landscape Engineers, to draw up plans for landscaping the church site.

On October 14, 1959, a congregational dinner meeting was held at the senior high school cafeteria at 6:30 p.m., with approximately 500 present. The meeting was the result of careful and detailed planning. Guests were seated alphabetically at small tables presided over by hostesses who had called by telephone all adult members of the church. Each guest was directed to her table by Mrs. W.B. Hall, hostess chairman.

The leaders and those appearing on the program were seated at a long table at the top of the room. J. Welch Harriss, Chairman of the Steering Committee, presented Holt McPherson, Chairman of the Fund Raising Campaign. Not only has Mr. McPherson been one of the most zealous and important leaders in the whole campaign, he has been most generous in publicizing the work in the columns of the High Point Enterprise. Mr. McPherson presided over the meeting. The invocation was given by the pastor, Dr. Herbert.

After dinner had been served, R.T. Amos, Chairman of the Building Committee, reviewed the building program up to this time. Individuals representing various departments of the church life spoke on the meaning of the enlarged church to his or her own group.

Bob Wilder, eleven-year old member of the junior department spoke on "What the Building Will Mean to Our Children".

Lynne Sizemore, Senior High School sophomore, on "As Viewed by Youth."

Mrs. George W. Lyles, Jr. member of the "Mr. and Mrs." Class in Sunday school: "A Place for Adults."

Gaither Frye, Elementary School Principal and Chairman of the Education Commission: "What Will the New Facilities Mean to Our Total Christian Education Program?" Charles McAnally, Chairman of the Board of Trustees: "What Is the Financial Need?"

Mr. McAnally presented in detail by means of a chart the additional funds needed to carry out the whole project (except the Sanctuary) to completion.

Building Contracts and fees \$388,978 Landscaping, parking, etc. \$145,500 Chapel furnishings, memorials,

Church School	
and offices	\$116,647
Building indebtedness	
and interest	\$222,006
Contingents	\$ 83,826
Total	\$956,951
Assets	\$382,915
Net Amount Needed	\$574,036

Chairman Holt McPherson presented W.A.D. Parks, counselor to the Fund Raising Committee, who spoke on "How It Can Be Done".

At the end of the meeting a vote was taken on accepting the recommended goal and going ahead. The action was passed by an overwhelming majority.

The meeting closed with the group joining hands and singing, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."



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Chapter 20 Breaking Ground

In the church bulletin for June 19, 1958, appeared this all-inclusive invitation:

All members and friends
Of Wesley Memorial
Are invited to a
Brief Ground-Breaking Ceremony

About Twelve Noon

(soon after the close of a shortened Morning worship)

On Sunday June 29

The event had been announced and publicized also in other ways, and all interested people, members of Wesley Memorial, and others were cordially invited to be present.

From Dr. Herbert's regular informal communication, "The Pastor Chats", in the bulletin for this Sunday, the following excerpt will be remembered:

"This Sunday, June 29, will surely go down in the annals of Wesley Memorial as one of the red-letter days in the long and noble history of our beloved church. It is the formal beginning of work on the new church building. It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that this building will be used for the glory of God for hundreds of years. Many generations of children will learn of the love of Jesus within its walls. Surely a cloud of witnesses, those dear members of this church who have gone before us to their heavenly home, will surround us with their spiritual presence as we undertake this noble and historic enterprise."

This paragraph was written, of course, before the ground-breaking ceremony took place. A week later, in the bulletin for July 6, 1958, Dr. Herbert wrote:

"The heavens smiled upon us, and in that bright noon time we began symbolically the construction of our new church. . . Now that construction has begun, may God give us glad, grateful, and generous hearts that we may see this great undertaking through to a successful conclusion."

At the 11:00 service on June 29 Dr. Herbert preached on the subject "God's Building" using as a text I Corinthians 3:11 – "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The choir under the direction of W. Howard Coble sang as an offertory anthem "The Lord is King: Lift Up Thy Voice!" by Wolff.

After the conclusion of the service, the congregation assembled at the site of the new church. Dr. J. Clay Madison, District Superintendent, offered a prayer of thanksgiving. The responsive reading which followed was Psalm 84.

The procedure followed the traditional ritual for ground-breaking for a church. The general contractor, L.R. Stewart, provided a spade and passed it to Dr. Madison, who broke the ground and passed the spade to Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr., pastor, and Amos R. Kearns, Chairman of the Official Board. Following, a representative of various organizations each turned a spade of earth, passing the spade from one to another.

In addition to the Building Committee, architects and contractors, who are named elsewhere and those already mentioned as taking part in the ceremony, other representatives and their organizations were: The Methodist Church
Dr. J. Clay Madison
The Official Board
Pastor
Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr.
Board of Trustees
Charles W. McAnally

Building Committee Chairman R.T. Amos

Chapel Committee Charles L. Kearns
Christian Education Committee

Stian Education Committee W.B. Hall

Kitchen, Dining Room, and Social Halls J.A. Johnson

Offices Committee Curtis Smithdeal Representing the late W.T. Powell

Mrs. W.T. Powell

Chairman of Fund Raising Committee Holt McPherson

Building Committee for Present Church

V.A.J. Idol Building Fund Treasurer

Shubal C. Kirkman

Commission on Education

Gaither Frye

Commission on Finance

J.E. Millis

Commission on Missions

J.P. Hollingsworth

Commission on Membership & Evangelism

Dr. N.M. Harrison

Associate Board A.W. Klemme, Jr. Woman's Society of Christian Service

Mrs. J.W. Lindsay

Wesleyan Service Guild

Mrs. Ralph T. Norman

Alma McCain Guild Mrs. J.R. Peacock, Jr.

Church School Harry G. Bell

Children's Division Mrs. Fred P. Ingram Youth Division Frank J. Sizemore, Jr.

Adult Division L.B. Dutton

Nursery Home Department

Mrs. J.R. Adams

Nursery I Mrs. Clyde S. Chernault
Nursery II Mrs. Paul A. Stamey
Kindergarten I Mrs. R.A. Freedle
Kindergarten II Mrs. Henry W. Marshall
Primary Mrs. W.R. Morrow
Junior Mrs. O.P. Moffitt
Junior High Arthur Utley, Jr.

Adult Home Department

Mrs. P.V. Kirkman, Sr.

Methodist Youth Fellowship

Carolyn Roberts

Peacock Bible Class A.R. Strange

Woman's Wesley Bible Class

Mrs. Edith M. Sherrod

Susannah Wesley Class

Mrs. Dale Montgomery

Adult Fellowship Class

John A. Lindsay, Jr.

Woman's Bible Class

Mrs. William D. Lewis

Mr. and Mrs. Class A.R. Wilson Young Adult Class A.G. Whitener

Director of Children's Work

Miss Hulda Whitely

Director of Youth Work

Miss Sarah Leake

Treasurer Emeritus Mrs. W.L. Watson
Church Treasurer Mrs. Maxum Bingham
Church Secretary Mrs. H.L. Crowe
Church Hostess Mrs. E.C. Harville
Minister of Music W. Howard Coble
Organist Dr. Carroll S. Feagins

Recreation Director Richard Howle Sexton Thornie White

Architect Charles C. Hartmann



Chapter 21 Laying the Cornerstone of the New Wesley Memorial Church

Sunday, October 4, 1959, was a brilliant autumn day, very warm in the bright sunshine that poured over the unfinished buildings of the new Wesley Memorial Church.

At the 11:00 service in the church on North Main Street, Dr. J. Clay Madison, Superintendent of the Greensboro District, led the opening prayer. The choir led by the Minister of Music with the organists, Dr. Carroll Feagins at the organ, and Mrs. Charles McAnally at the piano, sang "Build Thee More Stately Mansions," by Gordon Young, and as an offertory anthem, "Gloria In Excelsis" by Mozart. The congregation read responsively from the Psalter, page 569 "The Hallowed House" and the hymn for the morning was "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord."

Bishop Nolan B. Harmon preached the sermon.

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation, in cars, moved across town the approximately two miles to the site of the new church, where the buildings are taking shape, and where the cavity in the wall waited for the copper box to be placed in it, and the marble cornerstone bearing the date 1958 was to be set in place and sealed over it.

On the platform with Bishop Harmon were Dr. J. Clay Madison, District Superintendent; Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr. pastor of Wesley Memorial; Charles W. McAnally, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Amos R. Kearns, Chairman of the Board of Stewards; R.T. Amos, Chairman of the Building Committee; C.C. Hartman, architect; and L.R. Stewart, building contractor.

Also among them were C. William Buckey, associate minister; R. Delbert Byrum, minister of education; W. Howard Coble, minister of music; Dr. Carroll Feagins, and Mrs. Charles McAnally; George W. Lyles, Jr., vice chairman of the Board of Stewards; Mrs. H.L. Crowe, church secretary; Mrs. Maxum Bingham, church treasurer; and S.C. Kirkman, assistant treasurer.

Most of the members of the various committees who have given many months of hard work and consecrated zeal to the construction of the church were among those who crowded as near as possible to the platform to hear and join in the solemn ceremony.

The New Church Building Committee included in addition to chairman Amos, W.B. Hall, C.C. Herbert, Jr., J.A. Johnson, Amos R. Kearns. Charles L. Kearns, J.E. Millis, Charles McAnally, Holt McPherson, Lynwood Smith, Curtis Smithdeal, Elliott Wood; Holt McPherson, general chairman of the Building Fund Committee, and J. Welch Harriss, chairman of the Steering Committee, which included 31 members and 4 ex-officio members:

Leadership Gifts Committee: R.T. Amos and J.E. Millis, Co-chairmen with 5 divisions:

Division A – J.W. Lindsay, Jr., chairman with 5 members

Division B – J. Grady Goldston, Jr., chairman with 5 members

Division C – R.L. Deal, Jr., chairman with 5 members

Division D – Robert B. Hoskins, chairman with 5 members

Division E – Harold L. Amos, chairman with 5 members

Also 150 or more men and women who were members of visiting groups or teams of the General Gifts Section.

Hostess chairman was Mrs. W.B. Hall; Chapel chairman, Charles L. Kearns; Chairman of general arrangements, J.E. Horney; offices and survey chairman, Curtis Smithdeal; and treasurer, S.C. Kirkman.

Official leadership included: Lay Leader, George W. Lyles, Jr.; Charles W. McAnally, chairman of the Board of Trustees; Harry Bell, superintendent of the Sunday school; R.T. Amos, Jr., chairman of committee on membership and evangelism; Gaither Frye, chairman of committee on missions; J.E. Millis, chairman of committee of finance; R.T. Amos and J.A. Johnson, lay members to Annual Conference; Holt McPherson, Harriss Covington, and Arthur Utley, Jr., lay members; Mrs. W.T. Powell, president of W.S.C.S.; and Harriet Austin, president of MYF.

A large congregation of other members of Wesley Memorial and visitors stood quietly as the ceremony proceeded.

Dr. Herbert opened the service with a reading from the Scriptures. Mr. R.T. Amos spoke, briefly outlining the steps from the purchase of the site to this occasion. Then he said, "And now, Bishop Harmon, as the building moves toward completion, I present to you the cornerstone to be laid in its proper place."

Bishop Harmon prayed the prayer of consecration, then led the congregation in the Litany for Laying Cornerstones:

Bishop: To the glory of God our Father, to the service of our dear Master and His church, and to the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit,

Congregation: We lay the cornerstone of this church.

Bishop: For a building of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, the pillar and ground of truth,

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

as a symbol of the church Universal, the cornerstone of which is truth, the creed of which is love, and its towers eternal hope, Congregation: We lay this cornerstone. Bishop: For a church that shall exalt not a religion of creed or of authority, but a religion of saving grace, of personal experiences, and of spiritual power, Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that shall exalt the ministry of the open Bible, with its faithful record of human life, its unfolding of the redeeming grace of God through Jesus Christ, its message of warning, inspiration, comfort, and hope,

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that shall teach and incarnate the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, **Congregation:** We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that shall fulfill a ministry of social services and be a blessing unto men.

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that shall be a renewing and cleansing power in the community, and loves every other communion that exalts Christ in the service of man.

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church with an open door for all people, rich and poor, homeless or desolate, who need the help of God through us,

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that shall gather the children in its arms and hold them close to Christ, that they may grow up in the church and never be lost from the fold,

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church which stands for the sacramental truth: "It is more blessed to give then to receive,"

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: For a church that takes hold in two worlds, and stands for the unseen and eternal, and which offers to men the abundant life which now is and which is to come.

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone.

Bishop: In loving memory of those who have gone from us, whose hearts and hands have served this church; with gratitude for all whose faith and consecrated gifts make this house possible, for all who may share this spiritual adventure; and with hope for all who shall worship in this house in years to come,

Congregation: We lay this cornerstone in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unto the ages of the ages, world without end. Amen.

At the conclusion of the Litany Amos R. Kearns read the list of items placed in the cornerstone, briefly calling attention to the history of the church from its beginning in 1856 to this time.

The actual placing of the stone was by the Bishop, assisted by L.R. Stewart whose firm, R.K. Stewart and Son, has the general contract for the church.

The beautiful and appropriate hymn, "On This Stone Now Laid With Prayer" was led by Mr. Coble. Never were words more suitable and solemn:

On this stone now laid with prayer Let this church rise, strong and fair; Ever, Lord Thy name be known, Where we lay this cornerstone.

May this spirit her give rest To the heart by sin oppressed, And the seeds of truth be sown, Where we lay this cornerstone.

Open wide, O God, Thy door For the outcast and the poor; May they know this house their own, Where we lay this cornerstone.

By wise master builders squared, Here be living stones prepared For the temples near Thy throne, Jesus Christ its Cornerstone.

The service ended with the benediction pronounced by Dr. J. Clay Madison.

A few days prior to the cornerstone laying, the committee met to place in the copper box the items to be preserved. The High Point Enterprise for October 5, 1959, printed a photograph of the ceremony. Participating were Dr. C.C. Herbert, Jr., J.E. Millis, Amos R. Kearns, W.B. Hall, Lynwood Smith, R.T. Amos, Holt McPherson, and J. Welch Harriss.

The following items were placed in the box, which was carefully sealed:

- 1. A Bible given by the junior department of Sunday School.
- 2. A Methodist hymnal bearing original signatures of the choir members of all the choirs.
- 3. A Methodist Discipline, 1956, with an inscription in Bishop Harmon's handwriting, and bearing his signature, stating that this book is included in Wesley Memorial's cornerstone. This is especially appropriate because before his elevation to the episcopacy, Bishop Harmon was Book Editor of the Methodist Publishing House for many years, and as such edited a number of successive editions of the "Discipline." The 1956 edition was the last edited by him.

- 4. Western North Carolina Conference Journal, 1959 edition.
- 5. North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 1, 1959.
- 6. A copy of Together magazine.
- 7. The following list of names:

 Members of the church
 Organization of the church
 Official Board; Associate Board;

 Committees including the New
 Building Committee, etc.
 Organizations of church school; officers,

teachers, class officers.

- List of officers and committees of Peacock Class, Adult Fellowship, and Mr. and Mrs. Class. Year books of Woman's Wesley Class and Susannah Wesley Class.
- 8. Yearbooks of W.S.C.S. and Wesleyan Service Guild.
- 9. List of those paying in full their pledges to the 1954 Building Fund Campaign.
- 10. Other contributors to the Building Fund.
- 11. Picture, "Christ and the Children", given by Sunday school children.
- 12. Copy of John Wesley's letter from Buckminster Church, Wolverhampton, England (gift of Dr. Ankers).
- 13. Brochure, 1954, Building Fund Committee
- 14. Copy of Ground-breaking ceremony.
- 15. Guide to the new building.
- 16. Copy of Cornerstone Laying program.
- 17. Copy of presentation statement at Cornerstone Laying.
- 18. Bit of wood from Communion Rail at present Sanctuary on North Main St.
- 19. Bit of stone from exterior of new church building.
- 20. Copies of church school publications.
- 21. High Point Enterprise for October 2, 1959.

A beautiful brochure had been prepared for the occasion entitled "Ye are My Witnesses," which included all names of leaders as they were given above, the ritual of the service, photographs and a "Message from Our Pastor." Excerpts from it said:

"The new building presents a thrilling challenge to those of us who are engaged in full time church work. . . We glory in the opportunity it will provide for helping people to achieve Christian living of the highest quality. . . Our building is a felicitous expression of enthusiastic faith. I am confident that its beauty and its adequacy will awaken a joyous response of faith, not only in those or our own time, but the generations to come.

Wesley Memorial's new building is rightly a matter of pre-eminent concern to every member. At our best, we know that the Church, the Body of Christ, comes first in the lives of devoted Christians. Our Building is more than a dream come true. It is an answer to the fervent prayers of godly people over the years. Our sure hope is that this thoughtfully planned and beautifully constructed edifice will be a means of Christian development in the minds and hearts of countless persons, and that it will draw multitudes to know Christ, and through Him to live abundantly satisfying lives."

C.C. Herbert, Jr.





The Chapel under construction on the Chestnut Street building site.

Chapter 22 Architects and Contractors Present the Building To the Church

A little more than one hundred years ago a little band of Methodists in High Point were assembling when the weather permitted, and a Methodist preacher passed this way in a grove on Washington Street to hear God's word explained.

The little band of 17 has grown to over 2,200. The place of worship has grown from the first little one-room house by stages through two larger buildings, Washington Street Church, then Wesley Memorial on North Main Street to the new Wesley Memorial on Chestnut Street which now nears readiness for the congregation to move in.

On June 7, 1960, the pastor and a group of church officials pencil and paper in hand spent three and one-half hours with architects and contractors in what was hoped to be the final inspection of the buildings. It was a long and careful examination of a plant that has 1,600 lighting fixtures and 700 doors.

When the tour ended in the beautiful chapel, R.T. Amos, chairman of the Building Committee, who has superintended the operation from its inception with unceasing care and watchfulness, had kind words for all who had had a hand in building the great structure.

Chairman Amos complimented L.R. and George Stewart, as well as Superintendent Sam Graham of the R.K. Stewart and Son firm, general contractors, together with architects Harold Wagoner and C.C. Hartman, the several sub-contractors, including Bryant Electric Co., and all who contributed to the production of the new church plant.

However, Mr. Amos's pencil had been busy as the tour progressed, as incompletions, omissions, and digressions from the plans appeared. No glaring mistakes had been made, but the work was not perfect as both parties to the contract meant it to be.

A little more than a month passed and corrections were made. On July 15 another tour was made this time to the satisfaction of both parties, contracts were paid, and Wesley Memorial Church passed from the hands of the builders of its houses of wood and stone to the congregation whose great task it is to make it truly the House of God, consecrated to His service and to the salvation of mankind.

There remains now the completion of the furnishings of all the departments of the church and of the extensive grading, paving, and landscaping of the grounds. Yet to come is the Sanctuary which is scheduled for construction in the near future. Meanwhile a fellowship hall which will seat 700 is to be used for worship services.

Mr. Wagoner, famous for his conception of beautiful church plants, expressed himself as pleased with this – as he believes – his masterpiece. The plant is done in Gothic architecture and has 84,000 square feet of floor space spread in three directions on 19-1/2 acres of land. Mr. Wagoner says the building will be a "complete church plant" that will serve every age group in the congregation.



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Chapter 23 Arrangement and General Description of Buildings

The new Wesley Memorial Church is situated on Chestnut Street and Highway 10/A, now re-named Westchester Drive.

There are five main entrances: the chapel and adult classes on the left front; administration and school departments in the center; the nursery, right of center; the lower floor (top center) through the lobby to the dining hall and Fellowship Hall.

There will be parking for 400 to 500 cars.

In the various areas are the following number of rooms:

Chapel, seating from 150 to 175
Adult (9 rooms)
Administration (15 rooms)
Primary and Junior (12 rooms)
Nursery and Kindergarten (16 rooms)
Fellowship Hall (19 rooms)
Recreation (17 rooms)
Older Youth (10 rooms)

The nursery and kindergarten are on a second floor level. The main floor is on the street level on Chestnut Street; the second floor is a relatively small area just above the Chestnut Street entrance; the lower floor is one flight below the main floor; the ground floor level on the west side is best reached from the side facing the highway.

The Chapel faces Chestnut Street. Adjacent to the chapel is the reception room, with a recessed kitchen. This kitchen is one of seven throughout the church, each fully equipped. Thus various groups and organizations can have their own food service in the area in which they meet.

The large dining hall, which can accommodate 600, can be reserved for congregational dinner meetings, conferences, Wednesday night family dinners, and such other large groups. The kitchen in this area is correspondingly large and completely equipped for feeding large numbers of people. This dining area opens onto a patio on the west side of the church.

The exterior of the buildings is stone, in the tradition of the most famous and best-loved Gothic churches. Most of the interior woodwork is oak. Doorways to each of the classrooms are inset with small, recessed glass crosses instead of the usual square panes. The doorway to the children's area is decorated with figures of squirrels, rabbits, and birds. One-way mirrors in some areas enable parents to watch their children in the nursery without being seen themselves.

Even without the Sanctuary the buildings are impressive and inspiring. May they be a blessing to everyone who enters therein.



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Chapter 24 The Chapel

The Chapel is the most sacred and inspiring room in the new church today. Mr. Charles Kearns has worked untiringly, and he and his committee have cooperated closely with Wagoner and Hartman, architects, and with Mr. Elliott Wood and other decorators to be sure that every detail is harmoniously and symbolically perfect.

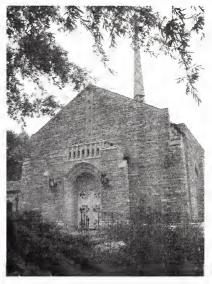
The entrance is from Chestnut Street and the building stands west of the site of the future Sanctuary and somewhat farther withdrawn from the street. A Gothic spire surmounted by a cross points heavenward; a similar but taller spire will rise above the Sanctuary. The entrance doors are massive, similar in design to the entrance doors to the other units, decorated with wrought iron hinges and featuring attractive and suitable scrollwork and rosettes.

The worshipful atmosphere is felt as soon as one enters. The beauty of the architecture and furnishings calls for silent admiration. The floor is of flagstones of a varied pattern of soft colors; the woodwork is all oak; the walls are softly tinted beige to blend with the woodwork; the Gothic pews of oak are padded with long cushions of soft green velvet. The lights are conventional lantern-shaped cathedral lights of colorless glass suspended from the ceiling by wrought iron hangings.

The Schickler organ and console are in the balcony where the choir will be seated. The pipes of the organ conform to the Gothic patterns elsewhere, and the tone of the organ is beautiful, rich, and resonant.

As one enters the chapel, his attention is first drawn to the beautiful bronze reredos, rising in shafts almost to the ceiling. This is as it should be, for the purpose of the chapel is worship, and the altar is the center of worship.

Between the vertical shafts of the reredos are filigree bronze panels featuring a continuous vine with grapes design.



The Chapel on Chestnut Street

On the oaken base from which the reredos rises are two small symbolic carvings of oak, one of a cluster of grapes, the other a sheaf of wheat. At eyelevel around the altar are repetitions of the word, "Alleluia", carved in open oak letters. The altar rail is of wrought iron, decorated with small brass crosses.

The platform rises two steps above the floor of the chapel with the pulpit on the east side and the lectern on the west. Around the top of the oak enclosure of the lectern is a text in open oaken letters: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." In niches on the sides of the lectern symbolic figures are carved: on the right from top to bottom, the chalice, the crown of thorns, and the cock; on the left, the robe and dice, Jacob's ladder, and a heavily draped cross.

On the pulpit are similar panels inset with repetitions of a praying figure with hands upraised, alternating with panels inset with rosettes.

As one turns from the altar and faces the rear, he sees on the facing of the balcony carved in conventional design of oak the three words: "Study," "Worship," "Service."

One can stand long before the four stained glass double windows, framed in Gothic arches of stone, set in the west wall. Joining the arches, carved also in stone are symbolic Gospel writers: Matthew, the winged man; Mark, the winged lion, Luke, the winged ox; and John, the winged eagle. These windows were designed and created by the late Albert W. Klemme and his son, Al. W. Klemme, Jr., owners of The High Point Decorative Glass Co. The work was about six months in construction and is a marvel of perfection in color, design and subjects selected for the medallions.

The colors range through many shades of blue from palest azure to deep sapphire; from rose to ruby red; from pale green to emerald; topaz to rich gold; with touches of soft amethyst. Each window is decorated with countless small jewel-like conventional designs patterned on the background and enclosed by a small leaded rim of varying shades of blue. This panel is repeated in a similar circular leaded pattern to form the setting for the three medallions arranged vertically on each window. The subjects for the medallions were selected by Dr. Herbert, the pastor, and each medallion tells in exquisite art the story of some event in the life of Christ, a story from the Old Testament and an incident from church history. They are arranged symmetrically with the top medallion related to the ministry of Christ, the one in the middle to church history, and the one at the bottom to the Old Testament. The subjects give evidence of the hours of study and scholarly research devoted to their selection that they may contribute to the worshipful atmosphere of the chapel. One can linger long in thoughtful admiration before each window.

There are twenty-four medallions.

The first one at the top of the window nearest that altar is:

- 1. The Marriage at Cana
- 2. Susannah Wesley Instructing John
- 3. Abraham Sacrificing Isaac

The second window:

- 1. The Woman of Samaria
- 2. Susannah Wesley Preaching at Epworth
- 3. Moses and the Laws

The third window:

- 1. Christ Cleansing the Leper
- 2. John Wesley at Aldersgate
- 3. Samuel Anointing Saul

The fourth window:

- 1. Parable of the Prodigal Son
- 2. John Wesley Preaching on His Father's Tomb
- 3. David Plays the Harp to the Sheep

The fifth window:

- 1. Sermon on the Mount
- 2. Charles Wesley Group Singing
- 3. Elijah on Mount Carmel

The sixth window:

- 1. The Transfiguration
- 2. Charles Wesley Composing a Hymn
- 3. Isaiah's Vision in the Temple

The seventh window:

- 1. Christ Blessing the Children
- 2. Francis Asbury's Consecration as Bishop
- 3. Jeremiah's Almond Tree and Cauldron

The eighth window:

- 1. Thou Art Peter
- 2. Francis Asbury on Horseback
- 3. Nehemiah Builds the Walls.

There is no disturbing note to distract from the spirit of quiet worship that prevails in the chapel. The family room, separated from the altar by a vertical louvered partition, will enable a bereaved family to attend the last services for their dead without exposure to public attention. Young parents who bring their infants here for baptism will cherish the memory. Communion and prayer services may assume greater spiritual power from the quiet sense of beauty and holiness. Small weddings will leave even happier memories in the hearts of bride and groom because of the beautiful surroundings and the solemnity of the setting.

This chapel, like the earlier chapel in an earlier church, is a holy place.

Conclusion

Even without the Sanctuary, the buildings of the new church are impressive and inspiring. Very naturally the Sanctuary will add power and even greater impressiveness. Though the only purpose of every building and every room is the worship of God, it is in the Sanctuary where the congregation will assemble to sing hymns and anthems to His praise, to hear His ministers proclaim His word, and to bow in humble prayer before His throne. It is right and meet that His temple should inspire us to awe and reduce us to humility.

We have advanced from one small room a hundred years ago to a large church of many rooms. The enlarged church should bring only enlarged service.

The words of Micah could be our motto:

"What doth the Lord require of these, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

And the Psalmist's cry:

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless His holy name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations."

Above all, the words of Christ Himself:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."



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Part Two

1960-2005

A History of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church High Point, North Carolina

by Ginny Fick

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Chapter 25
"A Profile of Purpose" 1960 - 1963 C. C. Herbert, Ir.



C. C. Herbert, Jr. 1957-1963

"The greatest move in a century" described what happened at Weslev Memorial on October 16, 1960, likening it to "the transplanting of a great tree, which has been hemmed in on all sides, to a site where there is plenty of earth and water and sunshine.

where it can send down its roots and reach out its branches."

The move began at the close of 11 AM worship on North Main Street. Members of the congregation – 1500 in all – picked up a hymnal and traveled the one-and-a-half mile distance to the new facility on Chestnut Drive. George W. Lyles, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Stewards, carried the pulpit Bible. The four communion trays were carried by R. T. Amos, Chairman of the Building Committee; James H. Millis, Vicechairman of the Board of Stewards: Charles W. McAnally, Chairman of the Trustees; and Amos R. Kearns, Lay Leader. Annie Mae Powell (Mrs. W. T.), Chairperson of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, carried the baptismal font; the cross was carried by James Woollen, Chairman of the Associate Board; the altar candlesticks by Frankie Peters, President of the Methodist Youth Fellowship; and the communion bread tray by Harry Bell, Superintendent of the Sunday School. There was also a ceremonious passing of the key from the contractor, through the architects, to church

officials, and finally to Dr. C.C. Herbert, the Senior Pastor.

Each family brought a picnic basket for a shared meal. Covered dishes filled the serving tables, and people overflowed from the dining room into the fellowship hall. The crowd exceeded the supply of paper plates but not the supply of food. Leftovers were sent afterward to the needy and the shut-ins. Following the meal, members of the Associate Board gave tours of the new building.

In a leap from its centennial celebration in 1956, this move had been several years in the making and was described as an expression of Wesley Memorial's "evangelistic and educational fervor" and its "concern for the future of the congregation and the community."

By the time the congregation moved to Chestnut Drive, its meeting place had already been in six different locations. At first the congregation gathered for preaching by Rev. Peter Doub and others on Washington Street under a brush arbor, made from small trees driven into the ground as posts holding a lattice of saplings over which were laid leafy branches to provide shade for congregants, who sat on crude benches. During inclement weather, preaching was held in the upper room of Wiley Sheetz's store near North Main and English or in another nearby store. Later, a one-room church built of handmade brick, was constructed on Washington Street, to be replaced in 1890 by a larger building. That, too, was soon outgrown and supplanted in 1914 by the building on Main Street. There, the sanctuary and the education building, added in 1926, sat surrounded by the Sheraton Hotel to the north, and retail stores like Harllee, Belk, Woolworth, and Richardson's on Main Street to the south. At that time, the only furniture showrooms were in the Southern Furniture Exposition Building farther south on Main Street. Just

behind the church on Wrenn Street was M. J. Crowder's High Point Steam Laundry. Maxie Crowder and his family were staunch members of Wesley Memorial; in 1995 son Richard, after retiring as High Point District Superintendent, joined the staff of Wesley Memorial for nine years as Minister of Visitation.

By 1960, High Point had grown to a population of 62,063, and along with it, the membership of Wesley Memorial had increased to 2269. The congregation had once more outgrown its building, and there was no room for expansion on that downtown site.

Robert T. Amos, in an undated memorandum, described how the process of building the new church began: "Realizing that our present church and educational facilities were outmoded and hopelessly inadequate for carrying on the work of a growing congregation, and being located almost in the heart of the business district, with no parking facilities, I felt impelled to do something about it." Accordingly, he and Curtis Smithdeal, a High Point realtor, quietly explored possible sites. What they found was a 16-acre site on the corner of Chestnut Drive and Westchester. Westchester was then a two-lane road known as Highway 10-A. Chestnut Drive had been only recently paved from Rotary Drive to 10-A. There was no Westchester Commons, and Phillips Avenue did not extend from Rotary Drive to Westchester. The property, fields and woods sloping gently down to a creek, belonged to the Hedgecock family and is thought to be a part of their original land grant. A horse barn stood where the sanctuary is now. George McLarty remembers horseback riding on the property; others remember hunting rabbits and squirrels there.

Later, after they had obtained a written option on the property, Amos and Smithdeal took 15 of the leading officials and members of the church to see the site on a Sunday afternoon, and they "enthusiastically agreed this was the place on which to build a new church." Though some members later protested that people would not go that far to church, the Board approved the purchase of two parcels of property from the Hedgecock family for \$42,500, with only one dissenting vote.

By October 1954 McAnally was able to report to the Official Board and the congregation that the site had been purchased and a building committee had been named with R. T. Amos as chairperson. The committee also included J. E. Millis, W. T. Powell, Holt McPherson, Curtis Smithdeal, W. B. Hall, Charles McAnally, and Joe Johnson. In addition, he told the Board, the architectural firm of Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia, along with Greensboro architect Charles C. Hartmann, had been hired, and a brochure had been prepared to lay out the construction plan for the membership. The estimated cost was \$1,641,105. A capitol campaign was launched. As head of the Building Committee, R. T. Amos wrote to the congregation expressing his thoughts on giving. He said, in part, "Neither the Lord nor your minister can, or will, promise you a material blessing for your help in building our church; but you will, nonetheless, get a spiritual blessing from it. You'll get more than your money's worth in the pride and pleasure you'll feel in seeing the church take shape; in knowing that in your lifetime you are helping to erect a church building of enduring beauty and value; something for your children and grandchildren-folks who in their lifetime may not have the privilege of helping to build a church."

By the end of January 1955, \$1 million in cash and pledges had been received. The balance was raised by July 1956.

Contracts totaling \$1,480,072 were signed on June 15, 1958 with R. K Stewart & Company,

general contractor; W. H. Sullivan, plumbing, heating and air conditioning contractor; and Bryant Electrical Company, electrical contractor. Two weeks later, on June 29, 1958, following the Sunday worship service, ground was broken for the new facility.

The next year, on October 4, 1959, Bishop Nolan B. Harmon came to lay the cornerstone, calling the building "a noble temple raised to the Glory of God, the Creator of beauty." The cornerstone contains a Bible, a hymnal, the Methodist Discipline, the 1959 Journal of the Western North Carolina Conference, copies of the North Carolina Christian Advocate and Together magazine, lists of members and organizations in the church, yearbooks of Sunday School classes and women's groups, a list of contributors to the building fund, a picture of Christ and the children, a copy of a letter written by John Wesley, a 1954 building fund brochure, a small piece of the communion rail from North Main Street, a bit of stone from the new Chestnut Drive building, copies of church school publications, and a copy of the October 2, 1959, High Point Enterprise.

Several months before the move, the weekly bulletins began to show images of both the Main Street building and the Chestnut Drive building, side by side. Even before the new building was occupied, a committee chaired by Charles Kearns had drawn up policies, adopted by the Official Board on July 18, 1960, regarding the use of the building.

Soon after the move to Chestnut Drive in the fall of 1960, the Main Street property was put up for sale for \$234,000 in cash. High Point Savings & Trust Company offered to purchase it for \$186,650, but Charles McAnally recommended rejecting that offer. Finally the bank agreed to the asking price, and the sale was closed with the provision that Wesley Memorial would have 60 days to remove items before the planned demolition.

One of those was the Austin organ, purchased by Dr. Carroll Feagins to be donated to the New Garden Friends Meeting at Guilford College.

The bells in the tower were removed and stored in the area of the new Chestnut Drive facility that had been earmarked for a bowling alley. The 13 bells, weighing between 500 and 3,500 pounds each and comprising eight notes of octave D, a sharp fourth, a flat seventh, and three extra tones above the scale, had been made in Belgium and subsequently purchased for \$17,000 by the Ladies' Aid Society of Wesley Memorial, using proceeds from turnip green dinners, oyster suppers, bazaars, and ice cream socials. After being installed in the tower of the Main Street building in 1920, the carillon was played daily from 6:15 to 6:30 PM as well as on Sundays and special occasions. When they were still tolled by hand, J. F. Hayden, often wearing a white suit and white shoes, climbed the tower to ring the bells on Sunday. Nearly a half century later, on April 11, 1967, the same bells were installed in the tower adjoining the sanctuary on Chestnut Drive. Several months later, on November 10, after eight years of silence, the bells rang once again. Refurbished in 2002 at a cost of \$60,000, they have since chimed the daytime hours daily.

The Main Street building was demolished in June 1961, and a building to house the bank began to rise in its place.

Wesley Memorial's home on Chestnut Drive, which the architects said would perhaps be the last great modified Gothic church to be built in America, embodied a new concept in the history of church architecture. Dr. Walter J. Miller, the senior minister during the time of planning for the new building, called it "a church for all of life." It would incorporate the kinds of facilities that would make the church central to the life of its members,

to the life of the community--facilities that would be used through the week, not merely on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. In its 88,000 square feet of space, there would be seating for 150 in the chapel and for 500 in the temporary sanctuary (Fellowship Hall) with the possibility of expanding that number by conducting services in the lobby between the Fellowship Hall and the dining room with seating in both areas. There would also be 18 additional Sunday School classrooms, 34 restrooms, and 8 kitchenettes. In addition, the original architect's drawings included a swimming pool, a bowling alley, tennis courts, and an ice skating rink, but these plans were later deferred. The architect, Harold Wagoner, said that Wesley Memorial, with its modified Gothic design, rendered in Tennessee crab orchard stone with Indiana limestone trim, "more nearly expresses my own ideas of what a church should be than any other structure I have been privileged to work on." In appreciation for that privilege, Wagoner donated the wrought iron work on the doors of the children's wing, a design featuring birds and animals.

Members of Wesley Memorial celebrated their new facility with a week of preaching, beginning with Bishop Nolan Harmon on October 23 for the first worship service in the new temporary sanctuary (Fellowship Hall). Following were services each evening of that week, Monday through Saturday, led by each of the most recent former pastors: Dr. C. Excelle Rozzelle, Dr. G. Ray Jordan, Dr. Embree Blackard, Dr. Walter Miller, Dr. Paul Hardin, Jr., and Dr. Arthur Kale. The week concluded with Dr. Ralph Taylor, the High Point District Superintendent, preaching on Sunday, October 30.

That afternoon Dr. Carroll Feagins and Wanna McAnally (Mrs. Charles) gave a recital on the new Schlicker organ in the Chapel, a two-manual pedal organ with 378 pipes. An electronic organ had been

suggested for the Chapel, but Howard Coble, the Minister of Music, insisted on a modified pipe organ. The problem was where to find the space to put one. Herman Schlicker himself, a craftsman from Germany who could barely speak English, suggested building a balcony and installing it there, moving the air conditioning unit to a space over the family room off the chapel. And that was done.

The stained glass windows in the Chapel, depicting scenes from the Old Testament, from Methodist history, and from the New Testament, were created by Al Klemme, Sr.'s company, High Point Glass & Decorative Company. When Mr. Klemme saw the windows in place for the first time, he regarded them as the highest example of his work. He died a week later.

A few weeks after occupying the new facility, on December 10 at 9 AM, members of the church gathered in the spirit of an old-fashioned barn-raising to seed the lawn under the direction of Lawton Dutton. They called it "Operation Green Lawn." The work was followed by a picnic.

During what was designated as a "Year of Spiritual Renewal," Wesley Memorial hosted three outstanding speakers: Dr. Bernard Boyd, professor of religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in March; Dr. Ralph Sockman, called by many the Dean of the American Protestant Pulpit, during Easter week; and Dr. Mack Stokes, Parker Professor of Systematic Theology at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in October. In November a Family Life Institute was led by Mrs. E. H. Ould. The emphasis turned to missions in January with Rev. Joe Davis of the Congo; Rev. Carl Stewart, missionary to Cuba; William Shaw from Korea; and James Stokes, author of the mission study book, Stumbling Block.

At the end of the first year in the new building, Dr. Chess Herbert, who had been senior minister since 1957 and who had presided over the planning and building of the Chestnut Drive facility, said he could see "a fresh, new vigor" in Wesley Memorial Methodist Church. Known as a good team leader, Herbert was complemented by the energy and enthusiasm of his wife, Libba. Besides managing "the greatest move in a century," Chess Herbert was appreciated for bringing great spiritual leaders to High Point. In 1962-1963, in addition to those already mentioned, these included Dr. J. Wallace Hamilton of St. Petersburg, Florida; Dr. Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School; Dr. Martin Niemoller, head of the Lutheran Church of Germany; and Dr. A. R. Ankers (Reg), of Wolverhampton, England. Herbert also inaugurated the custom of ringing the chimes at 10:40 AM on Sunday for the birth of a new baby in the church family.

In keeping with its intent to serve the community, Wesley Memorial offered its facilities for programs of groups outside the church. Among them were the Duke Divinity School and its seminar for ministers, the Methodist Student Movement and its state conference, the High Point District's School on Christian Social Concerns, the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences' Workshop for Christian Education Directors, and an area conference on Home Care services. To facilitate food service, Margaret Coltrane (Mrs. John) was hired as the first fulltime church hostess.

The Friendly Club was launched in 1962, after several months of planning, with J. A. Eshelman as the first president and Rev. Delbert Byrum, Minister of Education/Youth Minister, as staff advisor. The group met at Wesley Memorial and had lunch for a nominal fee along with some kind of activity or program. Its purpose was to offer recreation and Christian fellowship to older

adults. By 1990 the group had grown to a membership of 368 from other churches plus 65 from Wesley Memorial. The activities by this time included trips (a total of 183 up to the end of Delbert's era in 1988) to such nearby places as Chinqua-Penn and Duke Gardens and such faraway destinations as Disney World, Alaska, the Holy Land, and Oberammergau. Following Delbert's retirement, first Rev. Joel Key and then Rev. Ivan Peden shepherded the group.

Other signal events occurring during this period include the publication of Carol Welborn's (Mrs. Allen) book of meditations, Spiritual Renewal: Faith and Devotion. which was used throughout Methodism for Ouiet Day services. Another recognition went to the family of Wade McInnis, which was nominated as the 1962 Methodist Family of the Year in the conference. In that same year, the Council on World Service and Finance ranked Wesley Memorial 21st among 131 Methodist churches in annual giving--\$17,334 or \$7.62 per member. The Aldersgate Sunday School class entertained the House of Prayer at a Christmas party in 1961, inaugurating a tradition that continues into the year 2005.

Moreover, during Herbert's tenure, Wesley Memorial's mission outreach included financial support for Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Stewart in Cuba and Rev. and Mrs. Edwin A. Hackney (Faye) in India. During this same period, member Dr. N. M Harrison was helping to launch a major Western North Carolina Conference mission effort in Latin America, one that by 2005 involved 40 teams of about 500 people.

Wesley Memorial's earlier outreach also extended to the Beddington Street Mission. In June of 1963 Wesley Memorial assumed responsibility for the Mission that had been a project of the High Point District and had evolved into a day care center. Since there

had been no funding budgeted, donations were sought and volunteers as well. Lawson Ingram and the Boy Scouts in Troop #4 cleaned up the grounds, the Associate Board laid a tile floor and painted the building, various Sunday School classes went on Sunday evenings with food, fellowship, and Bible study, and youth groups participated regularly. With the leadership of Dr. N. M. Harrison, Rev. and Mrs. H. R. Ashmore, Vivian Peters (Mrs. W. R.), and Paulette Lindsay (Mrs. Andrew) and help from Jeanette Cecil and other members of Pleasant Grove Church in Thomasville, Wesley

Memorial continued to be actively involved until the Mission was turned over to Urban Ministry around 1971.

Rounding out the staff in 1960, the year of transition, were the following: Rev. Bill Buckey, Associate Minister; Rev. Delbert Byrum, Minister of Education and Youth Minister; Howard Coble, Minister of Music; Dr. Carroll Feagins and Wanna McAnally, organists; Ann Tyler, Director of Children's Ministry.



Chapter 26
"A Symphony in Spirit and Stone"
1963 – 1970 Dr. James G. Huggin



Dr. James G. Huggin 1963-1970

The 1963 Annual Conference appointed Dr. Herbert to Gastonia, and Dr. James G. Huggin to Wesley Memorial as Senior Minister, creating an exchange of pulpits for the two former college roommates.

Born in Greer, South Carolina, to a pulpitpounding Methodist preacher and his wife, Huggin was educated at Wofford College and Duke University. His family included his wife Elizabeth and their two daughters, Betsy and Martha. His habit was to work Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 6 AM to noon on his sermon for the following Sunday. On Thursday he polished it and on Friday he practiced it, standing in front of a lectern in his study. In the afternoons, he did what he especially enjoyed, visiting. Huggin owned a horse which he rode twice a week, usually on Monday and Saturday, but he also had a fondness for automobiles, choosing always a black or navy model. His wife owned a convertible, but he would not allow her drive it with the top down in High Point.

Huggin was well aware when he came to Wesley Memorial that he would be managing the building of a sanctuary to complete the plan for the Chestnut Drive facility. Although he had been in the ministry for 30 years, this would be his first involvement in a building project. He jumped wholeheartedly into the effort, taking part in every phase of

the planning and construction. He was at the construction site so often that the crew gave him his own hard hat.

He did not have to wait long for the sanctuary phase to begin. In a called meeting on December 1, 1963, the church Board voted, with no dissent, to proceed with building the sanctuary. The estimated cost was \$1,125,000. After all indebtedness for the first phase of building had been paid off in September 1964, a campaign was launched to raise money to build the sanctuary. With Holt McPherson and Harriss Covington leading the drive, a brochure, "Profile of Purpose," was prepared describing how the new facility had sparked new ministries for the church: the Beddington Street mission, classes for retarded adults, youth work camps in Appalachia, a Through-the-Week program for four- and five-year olds, and the use of facilities by community groups.

By February 1965 the campaign had reached its goal. With the construction contract of \$1,308,630 going again to R. K. Stewart & Company, ground was broken by the end of that year, on December 19, with the hope that the congregation would celebrate Christmas 1967 in the new sanctuary. As costs escalated in the course of building, additional drives for money were held. On August 28, 1967, the Board authorized spending up to \$1,700,000 to complete the project.

The contract for the stained glass windows went to Willett Stained Glass of Philadelphia. Huggin worked closely with this company to make sure the theology of the windows was right. He studied stained glass windows in churches up and down the East Coast. What he learned had an impact on the outcome. He suggested making the Christ figure in the rose window less medieval by showing Him without the nimbus. For the Prayer window he wanted to choose examples weighted less with sensational miracles. Instead of Daniel

praying for deliverance, for example, he proposed Habakkuk's prayer of faith. In one case, he and the Building Committee were at odds over whether to put Peter Marshall or Billy Graham in the Prayer window. Peter Marshall was chosen as being more ecumenical. It was Huggin who selected the subject matter for the window depicting the passages of the Christian life, in the passageway connecting the narthex and the colonnade.

In another instance, he asked the architect move the forward columns in the front of the chancel area to the rear to avoid creating a sense of separation between the congregation and the worship leaders, that is, the ministers and the choir. The architect later agreed that was indeed the right location for the columns. Huggin also chose the design for the communion table: a long one, suggestive of the Last Supper, with chairs at either end. He had seen such a table on a visit to Amsterdam for the World Council of Churches in 1961. Howard Coble, the presently retired Minister of Music, believes Wesley Memorial was blessed that Jim Huggin was sent at a time when the sanctuary was still in the drawing board stage.

Coble himself was deeply involved. Some wanted carpet down the center aisle to soften the sound of footsteps on the multi-colored Vermont slate floor during weddings and at other times. Coble argued for less carpet in order to enhance, not muffle, the sound of the music. Accordingly, carpet was laid in the side aisles only. Coble suggested that the new choir robes be red and white, but Dr. Huggin was reluctant to give up the traditional black and white, until Coble persuaded him that the livelier color was more symbolic of the Christian faith and the blood of the lamb. After he saw the red robes, Huggin conceded that Coble had been right. Coble also took up the cause for more lighting. The chancel area was originally lighted by spotlights in

the ceiling, but these proved to be inadequate. The choir and organist could not see their music. Accordingly, Coble persuaded Charles McAnally, and McAnally persuaded the architects, to put additional hanging lanterns in the chancel area. McAnally even raised the extra money to pay for them.

The Austin organ was designed by Dr. Robert Baker, head of the music department at Union Theological Seminary in New York. A gift of the Willis Slane family, it is neither a recital organ nor a congregational one, but a combination of the two. Baker even made changes in the architect's plan to accommodate his design. For instance, he put the pipes in the room, concealed behind sound panels. Baker's organ design was submitted to five builders. Austin, the second highest bidder, was chosen partly because that company had tuners working out of Winston-Salem. The organ at Main Street had also been an Austin organ.

Once the building of the organ was complete, the Austin Company needed 30 days of complete quiet to fine-tune the organ. Zoltan Zsitvay came to put the final tonal finish on it, checking out the 3,316 pipes, fitting each one to the acoustics of the sanctuary. A former javelin thrower on the Hungarian Olympic team, he had defected to the United States seven years earlier. Zsitvay was joined by Baker, Richard Piper of the Austin Company, and Vernon Thrift of Winston-Salem, who worked on the console.

The sanctuary bears two more reminders of Dr. Huggin. He and his wife Elizabeth gave the baptismal font, a mark of his special affinity for that sacrament. Their daughter, Betsy, and her husband, Bill



Collins, gave the wrought iron image of the burning bush over the door leading from the narthex to the sanctuary in honor of Jim and Elizabeth Huggin. It reminds all who enter the sanctuary that in this place one is standing on holy ground.

Another of his gifts to Wesley Memorial is the formation of the Wedding Committee in May of 1969. His intent was to assure that all weddings would be worshipful and that they would be uniform, with one not more elaborate than another. Helen Covington (Mrs. Harriss) was the first chairperson of the Committee, and she was joined by Nancy Lyles (Mrs. George), Della Parham (Mrs. Asa), and later Lorraine Gayle (Mrs. Sidney). Following training by the bridal consultant from Montaldo's, a well-established fine clothing store in Winston-Salem, a book of guidelines was created and then approved by the Commission on Worship. This guidebook has since been shared with other churches.

Among the rules is a prohibition concerning flash photography and a limit of three to the number of floral decorations that may be used. The rules are strictly enforced. In one instance, a groomsman appeared for the wedding with his satin-striped tux pants rolled up at the knee like knickers. The Wedding Committee sent him to the parking lot to adjust his attire. Wedding Committee members, numbering 15 women in 2005, are trained first and then go through a time of observing such procedures as how to arrange the wedding party at the chancel and in what order they should process and recess, and how to use the button in the narthex to signal to the organist that the wedding party is assembled and the music can begin. These volunteers commit to a period of training and also to a certain number of wedding weekends. Their duties also involve planning sessions with the bride and her family, coordinating with the church staff, and of course, being present at the rehearsal and the wedding.

In the final months of the building of the new sanctuary, during the week of June 21, 1967, the 199-foot spire was hoisted into place on top of the tower. Some came with blankets and picnic baskets to watch the process, delayed briefly until morning winds



Preparations are made to lift the steeple to the roof.

subsided. When it was done, they applauded. Huggin, in his shirt sleeves and wearing his hard hat, asked Contractor George Stewart if it was absolutely straight, and Stewart replied, "Yes."

The tower and the spire were offset from the nave of the sanctuary in order to draw together the sanctuary structure with the rest of the facility. That particular height was chosen because if the spire had been another foot taller, it would have required a red light on top.

The sanctuary building provided space for a pastor's study, and a Historical Room on the main level, and on the lower level, an office for the Minister of Music, a robing and rehearsal room, and a tunnel leading from the choir room under the sanctuary to the narthex. The Historical Room, a gift from Holt and Elsie McPherson in memory and honor of all the ministers who have served Wesley Memorial, was first under the supervision of Odelle Marsh (Mrs. Everett) and Mrs. Elizabeth Covington. The room was furnished in part with a section of the Main Street communion rail and pulpits from both the Main Street church and the Washington Street church. These pulpits have been moved to the sanctuary for special occasions. The

room also houses a collection of memorabilia as well as the church archives. Betty Warner Metcalfe (Mrs. Lawrence) was in charge of the decoration of the room and John Austin, the construction.



The steeple is lighted at night.

Nat Harrison was chairperson of the Grounds Committee at that time. Chuck Wood let him know that several old English boxwoods on Josephine Lyons' property on Lindsay Street were available. Harrison had them dug up and placed one on each side of the sanctuary entrance and another near the chapel. He also planted a row of nandinas across the rear wall of the Fellowship Hall. These have furnished berries and greenery for Christmas decorating ever since.

Wesley Memorial on Chestnut Drive now covered 120,000 square feet and represented an investment by the congregation of \$3.5 million. Appropriately, the first service in the new sanctuary was one of recognition and appreciation for the Building Committee, the architects, and the workmen, held at 4 PM on March 3, 1968. This service was conducted

by Huggin, assisted by Rev. Delbert Byrum, and District Superintendent, Dr. Philip Shore, and included remarks by representatives of the building team.

All was ready for the congregation's first worship service in the new sanctuary, scheduled for March 10, 1968. But an ice storm occurred three days before, which was the first time the sanctuary had been available for the choir to rehearse. Coble told choir members they did not have to come if they felt unsafe, but 73 out of 74 showed up, and there were no mishaps.

Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr. was guest preacher for the 11 AM worship and Mary Adams Martin, daughter of Harold and Betty Martin, became the first baby to be baptized in the new sanctuary. An overflow crowd watched the service by way of closed circuit TV in the Chapel. Dr. Walter J. Miller preached at a 7:30 PM service that day. Howard Coble said that after nearly eight years in the plain vanilla of the Fellowship Hall with the choir on risers at the back of the room, singing to the accompaniment of a piano, it was an emotional experience to have choir stalls, new robes, and an organ. Tears of wonder and joy flowed from all who participated in this service, he added.

The celebration continued the following Sunday with Bishop Nolan B. Harmon preaching and the combined choirs of Wesley Memorial, Centenary Church, and High Point College presenting Brahms' "Requiem." Other preachers who came for the celebration, which lasted throughout Lent, were Dr. William R. Cannon, Dean of Candler School of Theology at Emory; Bishop Paul Hardin, Jr.; Bishop Kenneth Goodson; and Bishop Reuben Mueller of the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) and the retired president of the National Council of Churches. In April of that year, 1968, Methodists joined with the EUB to become the United Methodist Church.

Huggin's first sermon in the new sanctuary pictured the dream behind it: "This church was erected not merely that people's aesthetic senses might be titillated, nor that local citizens might have something spectacular to show visitors to the furniture market. The justification of the structure is that it may speak eloquently of the Gospel. To use Ezekial's metaphor (Ezekial 41: 1-2, 47:1, 9), the building is here to provide the headwaters of that stream which brings life to all the world. 'Everything will live where the water goes." Huggin also offered a caution: "You may have an ever-so-splendid structure, but if bit by bit you become so enchanted with it that the dream it was built to nourish is forgotten, you have left a structure that is as a marble fireplace with the dead ashes of last year's fire." This sermon was printed in a brochure entitled "A Dream and A Structure."

The Historical Room was open after the close of worship, and there each church family received a copy of Christian Faith in Art and Symbol, thanks to an endowment from Holt and Elsie McPherson. Written by James Huggin, the book describes the stained glass windows and other architectural elements that tell the story of the faith. It was published by W. B. Hall and his printing company, with assistance on the photographs of the windows by Sidney Gayle's Alderman Studios. It received first place in a competition sponsored by the Printing Industry of the Carolinas. Unfortunately, W. B. Hall died during the publishing process. L. R. Stewart of R. K. Stewart, who participated in the first phase of the building, also did not live to see the completion of the sanctuary. R. T. Amos lived to celebrate the realization of his dream: however, he died in June at age 88, just weeks after the opening of the new sanctuary.

Alongside the sanctuary that was rising on the campus, the programs at Wesley Memorial were reaching new levels, especially in the areas of children's ministry, youth ministry, and spiritual growth. The Music Ministry likewise soared to new heights impelled by the new tools it had been given.



Chestnut Street building, 1960-present

At Lake Junaluska during the 1959 Annual Conference, Rev. Delbert Byrum and Harry Bell, Superintendent of the Sunday School, interviewed Ann Tyler for the position of Director of Children's Ministry. They sold her on the excitement and challenge of creating something new to go with the new facility. She joined the staff in time to preside over the transition to the new quarters, then engaged in a re-vamping of the children's curriculum, and began nursery home visitation. One staple of the Children's Ministry was continued, except for the year 1964 when, for the first time ever, Vacation Bible School was not held because there were not enough volunteers. That never happened a second time.

Tyler was also heavily involved in the planning for a Through-the-Week program for five-year olds, along with a team that included educators Gaither Frye and Ellerbe Rogers and Dr. Kenneth Geddie, a

pediatrician, in addition to Nancy Lyles (Mrs. George) and Dot Marshall (Mrs. Henry), and Tom Kearns, then superintendent of the Sunday School. The school was launched on September 3, 1962 with Jane Duncan (Mrs. David) as lead teacher, assisted by Mrs. Ann Corn, and 25 five-year olds. Evelyn Byrum (Mrs. Delbert) succeeded Jane Duncan the second year. Wesley Memorial's Throughthe-Week kindergarten was the first church kindergarten in High Point and the first kindergarten of any kind in the city to receive state approval. Open to the community at large, there was soon a waiting list, which led to expansion after several years to fouryear olds. Kearns called the program "an important tool of evangelism."

Ann Tyler also worked with the new youth minister, Warren Day, as well as Jane Duncan (Mrs. David) and Mary Clark Cole (Mrs. David), to produce a 15-minute TV program called "Deeper Roots," aimed at unchurched children. The script, written by Warren Day, used "Peanuts" characters, played by eight Wesley Memorial sixth graders, to portray the difficulties of living the Christian life. Taped for broadcast each week on Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour, the program ran for two seasons after its debut on February 7, 1965.

Warren Day was living in California in 1964 when he saw an advertisement for a youth minister placed by Wesley Memorial in a church publication. He submitted his resume and was subsequently interviewed by Dr. Huggin when he and his family were in California on vacation. Shortly after that, on a trip to the East Coast, Warren came to High Point and spent time with Delbert Byrum and Helen Covington (Mrs. Harriss), then Superintendent of the Youth Division. Day came on staff soon afterward, in October 1964, bringing the conviction that the traditional Methodist youth program was not working, that something different should be tried. From his doctoral studies at Columbia

University, he had learned that such programs were at odds with the latest research about how people change. After preliminary discussions between Day and Covington and between them and the rest of the staff, 13 youth workers, representing several churches in the conference, were invited to Millis Farm for planning sessions. Out of these meetings came the design of a new youth ministry called "Project 13." Wesley Memorial would conduct the pilot program.

Project 13 was introduced, in succession, to the appropriate church groups and to the parents of senior highs. Instead of being in Sunday School classes, the senior highs were divided into cadres, each one with a pair of adult members whose function was not to teach curriculum but to provide input based on their own life experiences as Christians. The curriculum derived from the actual questions, needs, and problems of the teenagers as they tried to come to grips with their faith. It would be intellectually challenging and emotionally involving; it would force them to think, to evaluate, and to problem-solve based on the tenets of the faith. Two workshops a year, planned and executed by the youth, with the guidance and support of their leaders, provided intense focus on the concerns of young Christians. A commitment to attendance on Sunday mornings and for weekend workshops was required. The program also featured an Easter Work Camp, an Alpha and Omega Worship service in the sanctuary, a Snow Ball, and Cellar Wesliano, a spaghetti dinner served by the youth as a fund-raiser.

The early results were that in the Senior High program alone, in 1966-67, attendance went up 125% from 1963; the number of adult workers went from 3 to 19, and 95% of the youth made a pledge to the church budget. Also, in 1963 three youth were considering a church-related vocation, and in 1966-67, there were 13. Gains were made in the Junior High program as well.

Wesley Memorial also sent a youth caravan into the mission field. In July 1964, a group of eight members of Wesley Memorial's youth group, led by Associate Minister David Jarvis and his wife Virginia, spent four weeks in Costa Rica living a different way of life, seeing poverty up close, helping to upgrade a mission church and its grounds, picking coffee beans for the local missionaries to sell, dispensing health care, and sharing their faith.

Because it was a vital, cutting-edge ministry, many young people were drawn from other churches in the community. Pat Scott, a former cadre adult, remembers having a meaningful one-to-one encounter with a High Point College student who came as a guest to a Senior High Workshop at Camp Penn. His name was Nido Qubein, who later became a nationally recognized motivational speaker and an active member of Wesley Memorial, and in 2005, the President of High Point University.

Both Ann Tyler and Warren Day left the staff in the summer of 1967. Tyler was succeeded first by Linda Wiseman and then, in 1968, by Jean Bowman; Bob Howard became Warren Day's replacement.

The adults of Wesley Memorial were likewise experiencing new life. In August 1966 Rev. Ben Johnson led a Lay Retreat for the High Point District. The following March he and Tap Hanson conducted a Lay Witness Mission at Wesley Memorial. A second Lay Witness Mission, led by Tap Hanson, occurred the following year, in October 1968. From this, members of Wesley Memorial joined the lay witness team visiting other churches, and they also led in the formation of Sharing Groups, 40 small groups which met in homes for mutual support and encouragement in Christian growth. On reflection, Bill McGuinn believes the Lay

Witness Mission created an awareness that being a Christian was far more than being a loyal church member; it was about having a relationship with Christ. The effects of the Lay Witness movement are apparent decades later in the changed lives of members of Wesley Memorial, Max Meeks observed.

On the lighter side, George McLarty, who was then leading the Associate Board, suggested to Howard Coble holding a dinner theater which would raise funds for the projects of the Associate Board. The first "Songs for a Spring Evening" was held on June 3, 1966. The choir gave a program of light classical and popular music following dinner. The tickets for dinner and the show were \$3 per person. Each Associate Board member was responsible for selling four tickets. One year, for instance, 300 reservations were made and the proceeds were \$800. This event continued annually for nearly 30 years, until 1994, with the exception of cancellation one year due to illness.

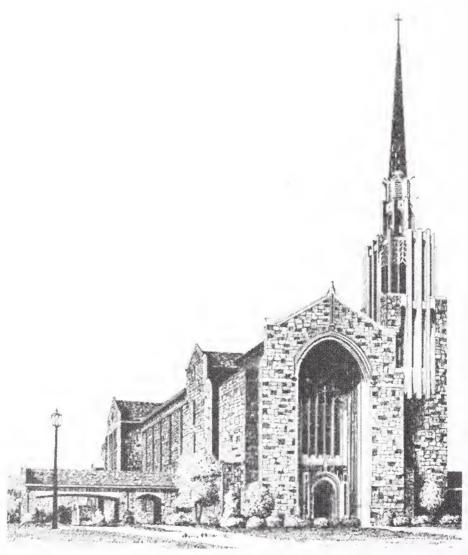
The Associate Board applied the money raised to such needs as draperies for the youth area, tablecloths for the dining room, and office equipment. The Board also sponsored children at the Children's Home, the Methodist Orphanage in Winston-Salem, and contributed to Camp Shepherd, the conference retreat center in Randolph County. Perhaps their most visible project is the picnic shelter. Not only did they buy the materials for the shelter, including crab orchard stone for the fireplace to match the nearby sanctuary, but they provided labor for the construction. They called it "The Gothic Picnic Shelter." The Associate Board disappeared into United Methodist Men in 1986, in response to changes by the conference, but the new organization lacked the vitality of the older one and eventually went out of existence.

Other beginnings that have persisted are the addition of *Mandate* as part of the church bulletin (from June 1966) and the presence in some form, since 1963, of the Friendly Club, a ministry to older adults that includes members of other churches.

In the midst of all the forward movement came a loss. On November 27, 1966 thieves entered a classroom at the rear of the church, found the safe, and used an acetylene torch to burn a hole in it big enough for a man to walk through and get away with between \$200 and \$300. Lloyd Hughes commented at the time that it was an embarrassment that we had no more money than this in the safe.

Jim Huggin left Wesley Memorial in 1970 to become District Superintendent of the High Point District, although his family remained a part of the congregation. After he retired in January 1982 and he and Elizabeth established a permanent home in High Point, he was named "Minister Emeritus" of Wesley Memorial.





An artist's rendering of the Sanctuary on Chestnut Street.

Chapter 27 "Think About 9t"

"Think About It" 1970 - 1979 Dr. Bernard R. Fitzgerald



Dr. Bernard R. Fitzgerald 1970-1979

Dr. Bernard R. Fitzgerald took up the reins as Senior Minister of Wesley Memorial in June 1970. Like his two predecessors, he was the son of a Methodist minister. Born in Lexington, he graduated from

high school in Charlotte and attended Pfeiffer College, where he became friends with Max Meeks. He then studied at Wofford College, and also at Duke University. Subsequently he studied at the University of Edinburgh and served in the Navy during World War II. He and his wife, the former Carol Crockett, had four children: Danny, Sarah, Johnny, and Michael. The Fitzgerald children were the first youngsters the parsonage had housed in a long while.

After his appointment to Wesley Memorial, Fitzgerald and Huggin had a meeting. Fitzgerald asked, "Jim, tell me about Wesley Memorial." Huggin replied, "Bernard, there are more people at Wesley Memorial who take their religion seriously than at any other church I know of."

John Lindsay, a lifelong member of Wesley Memorial, believes Bernard Fitzgerald never preached a sermon without mentioning Dr. Pierce Harris, who was for many years at First Methodist Church on Peachtree Street in Atlanta. Fitzgerald concedes he admired Pierce Harris greatly. In his early years, he

hitchhiked several times to Atlanta to hear him preach. On one visit, Fitzgerald recalls, Harris showed him the mark of a bullet in the church door. "This was put here by a girl who came and sat on the steps of this church and put a bullet in her brain," Harris told him. "It reminds me--it should remind all of us-to pay attention to those who are in need." Fitzgerald never forgot that lesson.

Soon after he arrived at Wesley Memorial, Fitzgerald began writing a message for the front of the weekly bulletin. He always signed off with the words "Think about it."

Fitzgerald is a gifted storyteller. In retirement he has published two collections of stories, one of which, Southern Fried Rattlesnakes and Sourwood Honey, contains a story about his time at Wesley Memorial. It concerns the mess left by pigeons who had taken up residence in the bell tower. An exterminator was called to get rid of the pigeons, and he promised to do the job without causing harm to them. He climbed up into the bell tower and placed cracked corn and grain on the beams and ledges where the pigeons were roosting. The corn and grain had previously been saturated with a drug known as LSD. Fitzgerald tells what happened in this way:

"The pigeons ate the corn and grain and soon they were going berserk. Some were staggering around on the ground totally confused, and some were flying around in erratic patterns of disoriented flight--and one I saw tried to pick a fight with a red-tail hawk that happened to fly over. The pigeons were only temporarily affected, but when their erratic gyrations were over and the effects of the drug wore off, they associated the weird experience with the bell tower and never returned."(30)

Early in Fitzgerald's tenure there were two significant staff changes. Polly Bingham,

who had been on staff since 1945 as Church Secretary and then Treasurer, became Business Manager and Treasurer, a newly created position she would hold until her retirement in 1987.

Rev. Barry Osborne came on staff as Youth Minister in the summer of 1971. Fitzgerald and Huggin, then Superintendent of the High Point District, went to Franklinville, where Osborne was then serving a church, to invite him to come to High Point the following Friday for an interview for the position opened by Bob Howard's resignation. Osborne, a native of Asheboro, graduated from High Point College and received his master's degree from Duke Divinity School. He tells of the time in 1966, when he was a junior at High Point College, and came to sit on the corner of Rockford Road and Chestnut Drive and watch the construction of the sanctuary and to dream dreams.

Following the interview with the Search Committee, Fitzgerald offered him the job and gave him until Monday to think about it. Osborne thought about it and accepted. He and his wife Judi moved to High Point in June 1971 to begin a ministry that by the 150th anniversary year totals 35 years.

Osborne took the existing youth ministry, Project 13, and altered it into one that flourished for decades, becoming a training ground for many of those who later took leadership in the community. He built the senior high program around the theme of Diakonia, a Greek word denoting service, especially at the Beddington Street mission. He changed the name of the small groups from cadre to kerygma, placing senior highs in groups based on one-to-one interviews. He also added a third workshop and more mission trips: disaster relief in Homestead, Florida, in Bennettsville, South Carolina, and in western Virginia. The January Snow Ball became the March Crystal Ball with

attendance at around 500. The principle was the same as the earlier Project 13: the youth had ownership of their program, planning and executing it with the help and guidance of adult leaders.

As well, Osborne strengthened the middle high program, adding a new and different feature to each grade level and continuing the week-long summer camp experience that had long been a program highlight. Besides being involved in the planning and creation of workshops, the youth of Wesley Memorial conducted an annual worship service in the sanctuary, called Alpha and Omega, and joined together for a banquet at the end of each school year. This was the time for presenting the Bruce Hathaway Award to an Outstanding Senior, based on attitude, leadership, and work ethic. The first recipients of the award, established by Bruce and Betsey Hathaway in memory of their son were, in 1979, Wendell Wood and Margaret McCuiston.

During the mid-70s a space in the youth area that had been planned as an office for a recreation director was turned into a Meditation Room, using funds donated by Nan Harrison (Mrs. N. M., Sr.) in memory of her husband, Dr. Harrison. Al Klemme, Sr.'s glass company created a stained glass window, designed by Pat Scott, using the symbol of the descending dove. On a raised platform at one end of the small room was a white table that served as an altar. On it was an open Bible and suspended above was a polished stainless steel cross made by Allen Kearns as a tribute to his parents. A railing in front of the raised platform and six chairs completed the furnishings.

Howard Coble, who in 1971 served as President of the National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians, continued to offer outstanding music to the congregation and the community. Over the course of roughly the first decade in the new sanctuary, the choir rendered Mendelssohn's "Requiem," Handel's "Messiah," Vaughn Williams's "Hodie," Verdi's "Requiem," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and also his "St. Paul" oratorio. Organ recitals were given by Walter Ball from Myers Park United Methodist Church, Dr. John T. Hofman of New York State University and Alec Wyton of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, and Jerry F. Byrd.

Guest soloists with the choir included Malcolm Smith of the Metropolitan Opera Company and Joseph Blanton of the New York Opera Company. V. Earle Copes came from Birmingham, Alabama, to lead in a Great Day of Methodist Singing. The choir of Southern Methodist University, led by Dr. Lloyd Pfautsch, presented a program, and the chancel choir of Wesley Memorial traveled to Graylyn to perform with the Winston-Salem Symphony for "Music at Sunset."

Likewise during this same period, a parade of outstanding preachers and lay speakers visited Wesley Memorial. For the Mission to Ministers, the following came: Dr. R. Leonard Small of Edinburgh, Scotland; Dr. John N. Gladstone of Toronto, Canada; Dr. Robert E. Goodrich of Dallas, Texas; and Dr. Myron S. Augsburger, general secretary of the Mennonite Church, based in Hillsboro, Kansas. Both Dr. Paul Hardin III, President of Wofford College, and Dr. Douglas Reid Sasser, President of Pfeiffer College, spoke on Layman's Sundays. Also Dr. Ben Haden of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Dr. Charles Allen from Houston, Texas, led separate revival services. And from Washington, D. C., at different times, came Dr. Harold DeWolf of Wesley Seminary, Dr. Tom Shriner, chaplain for the Washington Redskins, and Sonya Dyer from the Church of the Saviour for Three Days of Renewal.

The women of the church had several historic moments during this time. In January 1973,

the Woman's Society of Christian Service merged with the Wesleyan Service Guild, which was made up of working women, to form United Methodist Women. At the charter tea that February, 288 women signed up as charter members. The women had first organized in 1888 as the Ladies' Aid Society, with these purposes:

To look after minor needs of the church; care for the parsonage; buy the pastor a new suit to wear to conference; visit new people in the community; minister to the sick; clothe needy children in the community.

The name changed in 1915 to the Women's Missionary Auxiliary, and in 1940, following the merger of the various branches of the Methodist Church, the name changed again to Woman's Society of Christian Service. Under the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries, the new structure provided more flexibility and additional opportunities for study, growth, and outreach. For example, there were interest groups for those who wanted an alternative to joining a circle.

The group's main fundraiser, a sale of baked goods and craft items, moved from a spring event to a fall event in 1973 and was called the UMW Annual Holiday Food Festival. In addition to the usual items for sale, fabric, plants, and Christmas decorations were offered. The proceeds that year went toward furnishing the new parsonage.

The year 1973 was a time of great celebration. All of the debt, totaling \$4 million, for the entire new facility on Chestnut Drive was paid. March 18, almost exactly five years from the opening of the new sanctuary, was set aside for the dedication of the total building. Bishop Earl G. Hunt preached the dedicatory sermon, assisted by Dr. Eugene Peacock, District Superintendent, and former pastors Dr. James G. Huggin and Dr. C. C. Herbert, Jr. The celebration continued on April 1 with

a musical drama, created and directed by Dr. James E. Hull and called "Symphony in Spirit and Stone." Five celebration banners, designed by Hull, depicted the life of the church: John Wesley's "The World is My Parish," the sacraments, the State of North Carolina, the Methodist symbol of cross and flame, and the butterfly. Designed originally by Dr. Hull for the Methodist Bicentennial at Duke University, these banners were made for Wesley Memorial by Mrs. Earl Hutto, Dot Marshall (Mrs. Henry), Lorraine Stout (Mrs. Richard), Mrs. Jack Weaver, Mo Robinson (Mrs. James), Mrs. Howard Teal, and Barbara Barnett (Mrs. Harvey).

The celebration of the retirement of the church debt was still resounding when additional property was acquired. In May 1973 a new parsonage at 947 Nottingham was purchased for \$56,400 and soon afterward, the Thayer Coggin home at 1103 Chestnut Drive was bought for \$56,000, including furnishings, for the youth minister and his family. As it was used as a staff residence, the property was exempt from taxes.

Several changes in property ownership occurred in 1974-75. The parsonage at 202 Hillcrest Drive was sold for \$40,000. By the end of 1975, most of the new debt for parsonages had been cleared. In April of 1975, another piece of the Chestnut Drive property, .57 acres, was sold to the North Carolina Board of Transportation for \$16,000 for the purpose of widening Westchester Drive. In late 1975, a new 51-passenger bus and a 14-passenger van were purchased with funds raised by the UMW. In order to make these vehicles self-supporting, groups using them were charged 25 cents per mile.

Meanwhile church finances were being impacted in other areas. Late in 1971 thieves broke into the church and took three electric typewriters, three standard typewriters, three electric adding machines,

a photocopy machine, a calculator, and a check protector. In the mid-70s, two electric rate increases dictated savings measures. The air conditioning, for example, was not turned on until Sunday morning during the summer. For one period of time, the federal government decreed that anyone not reducing consumption by 35% would have their electrical power cut off. Accordingly, the staff went through the entire church building and disconnected every other fluorescent tube. Then, when the cost of natural gas increased 625% in the late 70s, church staff and members reduced consumption by 23,000 cubic feet. Even so, the lower consumption did not cancel the increase. Another expense, the cost of broadcasting the 11:00 AM worship service on Sundays, went from \$611 per year to \$3403. Consequently, by 1979, the annual budget contained a \$20,000 increase. But by Thanksgiving, the congregation met the challenge with pledges to achieve the budget goal; and for the first time in seven years, it was unnecessary to go back for second-mile gifts.

Wesley Memorial's ways of celebrating Christmas underwent changes during the 1970s. Beginning in 1972, a giant Christmas tree, covered with Chrismons (Christ monograms), has been placed in the sanctuary each year at the beginning of Advent during the Hanging of the Greens. The first tree was a cedar cut from the neighboring property belonging to Richard and Betty Jo Kellam by kindergarten children under the leadership of Jean Bowman, Director of Children's Ministry. The Chrismons which decorate the tree are based on designs borrowed from the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Virginia. The Chrismons were created by the women of that church to put Christ back into the celebration of Christmas. Trained initially by women from St. Mary's Episcopal Church, a group within the UMW meets once a month throughout the year to

repair previously made ornaments and create new ones. Then when the Christmas season approaches, they supervise the lighting and decorating of the Chrismon tree in the sanctuary. The wreaths and potted poinsettias that complete the decorating of the sanctuary for Christmas are provided by memorial gifts. The church family comes together just prior to Advent for Hanging of the Greens. The Chrismon tree is lit, the wreaths are hung on doors and sanctuary pillars, red poinsettias are banked around the altar, and a large wreath with advent candles is placed on the communion table.

A White Gift Service, involving the children's and youth choirs singing Christmas carols and the congregation bringing gifts for the needy, was first held at Wesley Memorial on Sunday, December 13, 1970, at 5 PM. That year the gifts went to Urban Ministry and the offering to Methodist missionaries in India, the Hackneys. A few years later, in 1977, the white-wrapped gifts ranged from food for Urban Ministry, used clothing for the Cherokee Mission, toys for the Beddington Street Mission to money for UMCOR's World Hunger Relief Fund. Another tradition that began around the mid-1970s was the distribution of Advent Devotional Books to the members of the congregation. Written by members and staff and illustrated by children. these booklets have been prepared each year since that time under the auspices of the Family Life Committee.

Predominant among the ways Wesley
Memorial continues to celebrate Christmas is
the Christmas Eve Love Feast, which dates
back to 1971. As attendance had been small
at previous Christmas Eve services, Howard
Coble suggested to Bernard Fitzgerald a
Moravian-style Love Feast, a tradition that
flows from the agape meal of the early
Christians and was re-introduced by Count
Zinzendorf in Moravia and subsequently
brought to America and borrowed for

Methodists by John Wesley himself. At first Fitzgerald rejected the idea but then thought better of it. Stuckey Rives (Mrs. Jack) was asked to organize the first one, helped by Ruth Lindsay (Mrs. John). The basic guidelines, still followed, are these: More than 40 people are recruited to set up and serve. The youth put out luminaries and pass out napkins and candles. The buns are obtained from the Sweet Shoppe Bakery. Scripture is read, prayers are offered, the choir and the congregation sing along with an orchestra, buns and spiced tea are shared. Candles are lighted from one person to another as the electric lights are slowly darkened, and finally hundreds of people leave the sanctuary holding their candles and singing "Go Tell It On the Mountain." As many as 1,400 people have attended, some of them arriving as early as 3:30 PM for the 5 PM service.

Other traditions were born during this time. For many years in late October flowers were placed on the altar by the Kirkman family, two sons and three daughters, in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Percy Von Kirkman, Sr. (Susie Gurley), and their marriage on October 25, 1899, in the Washington Street Church. Regularly at Thanksgiving a bountiful arrangement of fruits and vegetables covered the communion table, given by the family of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Brinson, Jr. (Sarah Hutchens) in memory of their parents. Likewise, for Christmas the altar flowers were given for years in succession by Mr. and Mrs. George W. Lyles, Jr. (Nancy) in honor of the Christ Child, their grandchildren, and children everywhere.

The merger of the Evangelical United Brethren with the Methodist Church in 1968 brought a new mechanism for the local church, the Council on Ministries. This group had a unique function, to bring together work area leaders and staff to review, co-ordinate, and plan. Out of this meeting of minds came several specific concerns: lagging involvement of lay persons in the ministries of the church, reflected by poor attendance at committee meetings and difficulty recruiting workers, with the result that most of the jobs were being done by the same people year in and year out.

There was also an acute awareness of changing times and the need to alter church. programs accordingly. For one thing, help with food service no longer was being provided by circles. After extensive planning under the leadership of Nancy Lyles (Mrs. George), Chairperson of the Council on Ministries, the Marthas Guild was formed in August of 1974, with Ruth Campbell (Mrs. Jack) as the first chairperson. The Marthas were divided into work teams. Some were callers, others set tables or decorated them. still others served food and helped clean up. Pinky Sherrod (Mrs. Stanton), who was confined to a wheelchair due to arthritis, did most of the telephoning with the assistance of her daughter, Virginia, doing the dialing.

The Marthas worked the first meal in October 1974, for UMW members. In a typical year, they might be involved in twenty or more events. The Marthas blended the meditative/ spiritual with the practical/ serving functions of the church. A new structure, involving a great number of women working in teams, not only met a longstanding need but established a model. When Polly Bingham (Mrs. Maxum) attended the jurisdictional meeting of church administrators, she learned that large churches all over the Southeastern Jurisdiction were experiencing serious problems with volunteers in the area of food service, and none had found successful solutions like this one.

In children's ministry, Nursery Day was added to the Through-the-Week program for four- and five-year olds. In the beginning it was offered to three-year olds for half a day, either two or three days a week. It was later expanded to include two-year olds, then one-year olds. Finally, the Crib Room was opened in 1978 in response to the pleas of Susan Gurley (Mrs. Will), the mother of new twins. As the school grew in size and as additional staff persons were hired, Jean Bowman prayed diligently for the right person to emerge to teach each age level. In fact, she regards the growth of the Through-the-Week program as one of her most important contributions, partly because it happened despite the beliefs of some that very young children should be at home with their mothers.

In the adult area, responding to the concerns of the Council on Ministries, chaired by Nancy Lyles (Mrs. George), the Commission on Education invited members of the church to talk about their roots in Christian service. What was discovered was that people get involved in ministry either out of personal need, or out of a sense of responsibility, or because they see something good that happens as a result. Service, they found, was linked with discipleship and Christian growth.

An ad hoc committee, formed in July 1974, concluded that a survey of the congregation was needed to profile the needs and interests of Wesley Memorial's members. Pat Scott and Hope Councill (Mrs. Fred) headed the survey committee and Helen Covington (Mrs. Harriss) was in charge of putting together descriptions of lay positions in the church. A little more than half of the surveys were returned. The surveys brought praise for the children's and youth programs and for the worship services but also asked for additional adult opportunities such as lectures, forums, group discussions, and outreach opportunities. By using the survey information, leaders and staff might bring more members into the work of the church, in places where they fit best, and provide

training appropriate to the tasks they would be asked to perform. Another use for this information would be to discover which programs might need to be expanded, or altered, or discontinued.

As a followup to the survey, the Commission on Christian Growth was formed in 1975 and co-chaired by Stuckey Rives (Mrs. Jack) and Ruth Lindsay (Mrs. John). The group was charged with making sure the survey was kept current and the results used effectively. With the motto, "Following the unknown star," this group also engaged in dreaming what might be in terms of expanded programs and ministry for Wesley Memorial. The group was guided by three things: Charles L. Allen's book, What I Have Lived By, the example and assistance of Peachtree Street Methodist Church in Atlanta, and a workshop on Christian growth conducted by Dr. Mary Alice Edwards from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Wesley Memorial's outreach during this time extended to High Point Urban Ministry, to the Children's Home in Winston-Salem, to victims of tornadoes in the United States, to the Hackneys in India, and to such global needs as African famine and victims of earthquakes in Turkey and Guatemala.

The church was also involved in the planning for a Methodist retirement community in the Triad, which became Arbor Acres. Dr. Fitzgerald met for lunch with Dr. Ernest Fitzgerald from Centenary in Winston-Salem and Dr. Harley Williams from West Market in Greensboro to launch a campaign to build such a facility. Although some members of Wesley Memorial pressed to have the retirement home in High Point, the land used in the end was part of the Children's Home site off Arbor Road in Winston-Salem.

During the 70s other notable developments include the organization in May 1971 of the

"70" for a systematic program of visitation and in 1976 the formation of a Memorial Gifts Committee. During the 60s and early 70s the number of memorial gifts was relatively small. But by 1976, the number had increased, requiring a new way of handling these gifts. Consequently the committee, cochaired by Elaine Carmichael (Mrs. Odell) and Scottie Tucker (Mrs. Charles), recorded memorial gifts and sent acknowledgements. In 1989, for example, the Memorial Fund received undesignated gifts of \$15,252.50 and designated gifts of \$9,491.50. A priorities committee met periodically to decide what use would be made of undesignated memorial gifts. These funds provided for such things as carpet in several areas, storage units in the elementary corridor, new choir hymnals, an office for Barry Osborne in the Administration area, and they also set aside seed money for a new resource center.

A Town Forum on abortion, held March 24, 1974, brought together professionals in medicine, law, ethics, and social concerns to speak on this issue. Two years later, in 1976, a symposium for parents on drug abuse education was led by Bob Howard, director of the High Point Drug Action Council, Dr. Ed Auman, a local internist and Wesley Memorial member, and James L. Tennant of the High Point Police Department. Of course, that year also brought programs and services focused on the nation's bicentennial.

Thornie White came to Wesley Memorial recommended by R. O. Lindsay for whom he had worked at Guilford Hosiery. He was the sole sexton for the church when it was on Main Street and continued to serve on the maintenance staff after the move to Chestnut until he retired some time in the 70s. When he developed cancer, members of the church saw that he received care and treatment; and when he died, his funeral was held in the sanctuary.

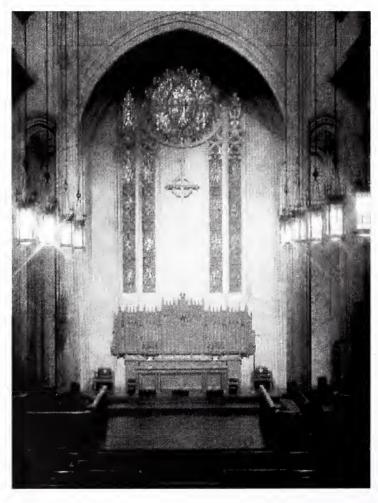
Wesley Memorial received a reminder of its own history when a stained glass window from the Main Street church was installed in the Historical Room in early 1979, as a memorial to Edgar H. Snider by his wife and children.

In 1979, after serving Wesley Memorial for a record term of nine years, Bernard Fitzgerald was called by the bishop to become superintendent of the Asheville District.

When asked to name the highlights of those years, 1970 – 1979, at Wesley Memorial, Fitzgerald named bringing Rev. Barry Osborne on staff; the Mission to Ministers, hosted by Wesley Memorial; a revival series that brought to Wesley Memorial

Dr. Ben Haden, Dr. Charles Allen, and Bishop Kenneth Goodson; the celebration of the debt payoff for the Chestnut Drive facility; the Thanksgiving family dinner; and the establishment of the Love Feast as a Christmas tradition. Seeds were planted in the Fitzgerald era that came to fruition in later years. One was a contemporary worship service in 1973, led by the group Dust and Ashes, which perhaps sired what would become a permanent addition in 1998. Others were the columbarium, the communion kneelers, and the Media Center.





The Chancel of the Chestnut Drive Sanctuary

Chapter 28 "Toward a Future Worthy of Our Past" 1979 - 1983 Dr. Orion N. Hutchinson



Dr. Orion N. Hutchinson 1979-1983

Dr. Orion N.
Hutchinson, a native
of Charlotte, came
to Wesley Memorial
in June 1979 from
Central United
Methodist Church in
Asheville. A graduate
of Davidson College
and Duke Divinity
School, he did post-

graduate work at Harvard, Emory, Duke, and Yale. Besides his work with the local church, he served many positions in the broader reaches of Methodism. During his tenure at Wesley Memorial, he attended the 1980 World Methodist Council Evangelistic Mission in Fiji and the 1982 World Methodist Family Life Committee meeting in Belgium. He and his wife also led an on-site Bible Study in Egypt, Israel and Jordan, in the spring of 1981. His wife, the former Louise Conrad, also from Charlotte, graduated from Queens College, studied music at Salem College, and received a Master's in Religious Education from Duke. The Hutchinson family included four adult daughters, all living away from home at the time they came to Wesley Memorial.

One of the marks of Hutchinson's time at Wesley Memorial was a booklet, "Experiencing the Church Year," dedicated to the memory of Dr. James G. Huggin, who died in December 1982. It explained the colors of the liturgical year as reflected in the changing colors of the paraments: green for Epiphany and Kingdomtide, white for

Christmas and Easter, purple for Advent and Lent, and red for Pentecost. Another was a change in the look of the 11 AM worship service. Its seven parts were designated as follows: From Our Worlds to Worship, Praise, Prayer, Community, Proclamation, Commitment, From Worship to Our Worlds. Another was the organization, with the Council on Ministries, of neighborhood group meetings, the first round being in August 1979 and another occurring in early 1981. One of the results of these meetings was the expansion of *Mandate* to include Update. Previously written by Mary Grace Megginson (Mrs. L. P.) as a volunteer before it was discontinued, it was resumed at this point by Nancy Shaw (Mrs. Robert). Update was designed to give members a closer look at who was doing what at Wesley Memorial. Still other Hutchinson initiatives were an expanded prayer ministry that included ministers' prayer partners and the solicitation of sermon topics from the congregation.

In 1980, three additions to the forms and functions of Wesley Memorial emerged, and a new need surfaced.

On Easter Sunday, 1980, the new 192-niche columbarium was dedicated. Since that time other High Point churches have followed, but Wesley Memorial and St. Mary's Episcopal Church were the pioneers in High Point. The columbarium had been in the planning stage at Wesley Memorial since 1974 as an acknowledgement that more and more people were choosing cremation over burial. A committee chaired by Dr. Kenneth B. Geddie was made up of Sidney Gayle, Chairman of the Administrative Board; Nancy Lyles (Mrs. George), Chairperson of the Council on Ministries; W. B. Hall, Jr.; Katherine Kirkman (Mrs. O. Arthur); and Arthur M. Utley, Jr. After being offered for sale at a pre-construction price of \$200 per niche, all were sold, with a waiting list for 43 when available. Built by Bob Stanley, the cost of \$52,000 was covered by the sale of niches

and had no impact on the operating budget of the church. Walks and steps were donated by Wayland Linthicum.

On October 5 of that same year, another project came to fulfillment when 14 kneelers for the communion rail were dedicated. This project was initiated by John and Kathleen Foy, who furnished the materials. Three years earlier Kathleen Foy had completed a wedding kneeler. It was designed by the Lutheran Center of Philadelphia, then enlarged by a Richmond needlepoint artist, and approved by the Worship Committee. After she had begun the work, illness forced her to put it aside. However, she was able to complete the kneeler in the summer of 1977, whereupon she said she went to her knees in the library of her home and thanked God for the extra days so that she could finish the work. Further, she was able to supervise the beginning of the communion kneelers project, though she did not live to see its completion. After her death in August of 1979, the project was directed by Martha Amos (Mrs. Robert T., Jr.) and Elizabeth Dunbar (Mrs. Aubrey). More than 40 women, who auditioned for the job, spent 10,000 hours, some assigned to sections containing words and pictures, others doing background, and still others, borders.

Needlepoint artist Trubey Walker of Blowing Rock visited Wesley Memorial to plan the design of the communion kneelers. She wanted the kneelers to show the life of Christ in pictures and words, not in symbols as is usually done, because they would speak more clearly. Dr. Bernard Fitzgerald chose the subjects: Nativity, Baptism, Temptation, Calling of Apostles, Sermon on the Mount, Good Samaritan, Jesus and the Children, the Transfiguration, Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Gethsemane, the Crucifixion. Each scene is framed in a medallion. The colors chosen--Persian yarn in three shades of green, red, white, purple, and gold on a

background of dark green bordered in red and gold--complement the stained glass windows and the wood and stone in the sanctuary.

Over the years, four sets of new paraments — white, red, purple, and green — were acquired using memorial gifts. Harold Wagoner, the architect, had advised replacing the satin brocade ones from the Main Street church, with a heavier cloth of wool to go with the size of the space. Designed by Fortress Press to the specifications of the Worship Committee, the paraments were custom-made in the German Alps, by a company known to Wagoner, using a heavy grade of wool from sheep that graze at the highest elevations.

Also, a new pall of purple brocade with a gold cross and gold trim became available as an alternative to a casket spray of flowers and as a reminder that all are equal in death. Later a white one, coordinated with the white paraments, became an option.

Another addition in 1980 was the Media Center, a collaborative effort by the Commission on Education, led by Harold Martin, and the Media Committee, chaired by Dot Kearns (Mrs. Lyles), and spurred by Jean Bowman and the Children's Ministry staff. Beforehand, Wesley Memorial's book collection, largely donated by estates, had been housed in classrooms and hallways or in the space used as a reception area and had been managed by Nancy Poston (Mrs. Aubrey) and Lib Conner (Mrs. Robert) as volunteers. As the Finance Committee opposed a fund-raising drive for a new media center, funding came from a major gift from the Rives family in honor of Stuckey Rives (Mrs. Jack) and from legacies, memorials, and unallocated special gifts. The space set aside by the architects for a bowling alley, which was being used for storage, was converted into a place to house books and audio-visual materials, according to a design by Pat Scott; and Joanne Miller was hired as part-time Media Center Coordinator.

The need for another addition soon became apparent—a separate cooling system for the pre-school area. Accordingly, the Property and Finance Committee sought an underwriter for the projected cost of \$50,000.

In the fall of 1982, Wesley Memorial celebrated its 125th anniversary, according to plans made by a task force led by Jimmy and Eva Dell Marsh working with Laura Amos (Mrs. Bob III), Anne Andrews (Mrs. Norman), Helen Covington (Mrs. Harriss), Tom Kearns, Bill Lindsay, Ruth Lindsay (Mrs. John), Harriet Mattes, Howard Pancoast, Stuckey Rives (Mrs. Jack), Pauline Wertz, Braxton Younts, and Dr. James Huggin.

For a full week, from October 24 to October 31, the chimes rang each day at noon. Dr. Hutchinson's sermon title for the 11:00 AM service on October 24 was "Toward a Future Worthy of Our Past." This title appeared in the logo created for the 125th anniversary by Pat Scott: a circle, representing the world, was inset with the outline of the state of North Carolina, a circuit rider, images of the churches at Washington Street, Main Street, and Chestnut Drive, with the steeple of the sanctuary extending outward from the circle.

The following Sunday, October 31, the worship service, created by Dr. James E. Hull, Jefferson-Pilot Professor of Religion at Greensboro College, incorporated dance, drama, camp meeting hymns, a 125-year roll call of Wesley Memorial ministers, a North Carolina Indian blessing, portrayals of John Wesley and Peter Doub, and a procession of banners. The 125th Anniversary logo was sewn into a banner by Chris Coggin at Design Environment, Inc., and this banner joined the procession with the five celebration banners used for the Symphony in Spirit and Stone consecration service in 1973.

During the week that followed, the UMW held its Anniversary Bazaar and unveiled the 125th Anniversary Cookbook, *Heavenly*

Delights, containing recipes contributed by more than 200 women of the church, as well as a brief history by Eleanor Latimer (Mrs. Tom) of women's work at Wesley Memorial. That week there was also a birthday dinner with a program of slides showing scenes from Wesley Memorial's past.

On November 7 at the 8:45 AM service, Rev. Delbert Byrum preached a sermon titled "Our Calling to Fulfill." In it, among other things, he described the "scattered life" of Wesley Memorial, saying, "I find satisfaction--and have over the years--to pick up an issue of our *High Point Enterprise*--and almost daily to find there stories of our people who are helping to make High Point a better place in which to live." Assisting in this service, by serving communion, were former associate ministers Dr. Wallace Fridy, Rev. David Jarvis, Dr. Julian Lindsay, and Dr. Lee Tuttle.

The 11:00 AM service on that day began with a procession of choirs, former and present senior ministers and associate ministers, directors of Christian education, and persons entering ordained ministry from Wesley Memorial. Pulpits from Washington Street and Main Street were moved from the Historical Room to the sanctuary and the collection plates from Main Street were used. Bishop Nolan G. Harmon preached. The choir sang an anthem, "The Armor of God," written for this occasion by John Ness Beck of the Ohio State University School of Music, using a grant from the Victoria Qubein Education Fund, established by Nido Qubein in honor of his mother, to be used for educational and inspirational programs alternately for children, youth, and adults. The near-capacity congregation was led in a special litany by Charles W. McAnally, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Others performing special roles were members of four six-generation Wesley Memorial families and two others. Frances Mann Peacock and Sam Strickland, who have been members for the longest continuous time. A

covered dish anniversary luncheon followed the worship service.

By the time of its 125th anniversary, Wesley Memorial had 2,654 members and the total value of its property was \$8,886,000.

Even as the past was being celebrated, the present was filling with new significance during this period. In 1983 the Administrative Board got its first woman as chairperson, Martha Amos (Mrs. Robert T., Jr.) Something else new was added to the staff: Manorama Boro of Jabulpur, India, came for a period of several months to work with children in the Through-the-Week program, in their choirs, and in the Media Center. In another cross-cultural initiative, the Commission on Missions elected to sponsor a Laotian family of four, the Yangs. A few members began to join mission teams to places like Haiti, Puerto Rico, and Bolivia.

During this time there was a change in the ritual of baptism. Jean Bowman, Director of Children's Ministry and a diaconal minister of the church as well, asked Dr. Hutchinson if she could participate in the baptism, and he agreed. She presented each child for baptism and afterward added that child to her daily prayer list.

The UMW and the Associate Board joined funds with the Memorial Fund to purchase new china for the church for a total of approximately \$6,000. Nearly 150 place settings of the old china were donated to Memorial United Methodist Church in honor of former staff members Mary Walker and Daisy Potter, members of that church.

Elsewhere within the body of the church, things were happening as well. A new ministry, the Contact Teleministry, a telephone counseling service, was put in place and the prayer ministry was expanded to include not only minister's prayer partners

but five weekly or semi-monthly prayer groups, and a UMW prayer chain. The Committee on Nominations recommended to the Administrative Board a policy on rotation of lay positions in the church. And the Commission on Stewardship sent out new family profile sheets to gather updated information on the congregation. David and Vera Mace came in March 1982 to lead a Marriage Enrichment Retreat. Further, the choir went to Lake Junaluska to sing for annual conference in June 1982

In the area of finance, the budget for 1982, \$615,622, containing the largest-ever increase, was oversubscribed. Also, the Parsonage Committee proposed selling 947 Nottingham Road and purchasing 1001 Country Club Drive for \$165,000. Further, the Trustees sought contributions to enlarge the Wesley Fund to provide income for repairs and improvements of the facilities.

For Easter Sunday 1983, the children made tissue paper butterflies in pastel colors and gave one to each person attending worship that day, starting a tradition that continues to the present. The Senior High Snow Ball moved from January to May and became the Beach Ball.

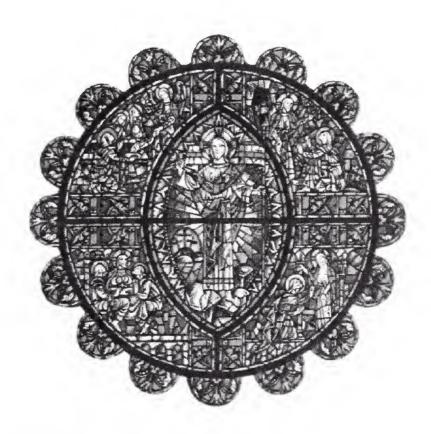
Among the visiting preachers and speakers at Wesley Memorial in the early 80s were Bishop Michael Begley of the Catholic diocese of Charlotte, who preached on Reformation Sunday in 1981; NASA Astronaut William Pogue and NASA Chaplain, Dr. W. H. Rittenhouse; and Lenten preachers Dr. Wallace Chappell of Charlotte; Dr. Wallace Kirby of Raleigh; Dr. Thomas Butts, Dr. Russ Montfort; Rev. David Jarvis; Bishop Paul Hardin, Jr.; and Dr. John Redhead. Adele Byrum, daughter of Delbert and Evelyn Byrum and a candidate for ordination, preached in January 1980 and Dr. Ben Witherington, with Wesley Works of Duke Divinity School, returned in May

1982 to preach in his home church. On June 5, 1983, three recent seminary graduates from Wesley Memorial – Tim Auman, Tom Latimer, and Kathy Clontz Sherrill – assisted with the serving of communion.

On May 22, 1983, the Staff-Parish Committee honored the staff with Staff Appreciation Day during the 11:00 AM worship. Names were printed in the bulletin, and each one was called to the chancel and presented by name and length of service and given a pin or tie tack with the Methodist cross and flame symbol. Special recognition was given to Howard Coble, Wanna McAnally, and Polly Bingham. A luncheon, prepared and served by members of the congregation, followed the worship service.

A personal message went out to Wesley Memorial members in May 1983 from Dr. Hutchinson expressing regret that he would be leaving, as he had been advised by the Bishop that he would be appointed a District Superintendent when Conference convened in June.





The Rose Window above the altar in the Sanctuary

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Chapter 29 "Live Alive" 1983 – 1988 Dr. Thomas B. Stockton



Dr. Thomas B. Stockton 1983-1988

Dr. Thomas B.
Stockton was
appointed to succeed
Dr. Hutchinson,
coming here from
Myers Park United
Methodist in
Charlotte. Stockton
grew up in WinstonSalem, where he was
involved in football.

track, and basketball. He graduated from Davidson College and Duke Divinity School and served on the Board of Trustees of Duke University. Engagement with social issues has marked his ministry. While serving in Reidsville in 1963, for example, he formed teams of blacks and whites to integrate every restaurant in town, all in one day. He and his wife, the former Jean Stevens, also of Winston-Salem, are the parents of three: Lisa, Tom, Jr., and Shannon.

The Stocktons arrived at the newly purchased parsonage at 1001 Country Club Drive on the day designated for moving, to find the chairperson of the Administrative Board (Martha Amos) and the Business Manager (Polly Bingham) barefoot, scrubbing the shower stall.

Early in his ministry, Stockton began to close his written messages to the congregation with the invitation to "Live Alive," derived from his favorite passage of scripture, "I have come that you might have life . . . " (John 10:10) Around town Stockton can still be identified by "LIVALIVE" on his license plate.

Church life did indeed come alive in many ways during Stockton's ministry.

Super Sunday began during the second week of September 1983 as a signal to the Wesley Memorial membership that summer had ended and a new season in the life of the church was beginning. This was not only a time for gathering the fold but for promoting children and youth to their new classes. The first Super Sunday, featuring lots of singing and a special message from Nido Qubein, drew about 1,000 adults, youth, and children.

August Sundays were likewise transformed. Casual attire was welcomed, old hymns were sung, and the aura of a camp meeting was summoned, recalling a tradition in North Carolina that goes back to 1794 when David Asbury held the first camp meeting at a place called Rehobeth, later Rock Springs Camp Ground. The aim of the camp meeting was to bring people together for spiritual revival and community building.

The Neighborhood Group movement, designed by the Commission on Evangelism to create small units within the church for mutual encouragement and support, had a similar aim. The movement continued on April 28, 1985, with a covered dish dinner and seating by neighborhood groups, 46 of them, each having a leader and made up of anywhere from 6 to 32 family units.

Some things at Wesley Memorial did not change but continued and became causes for celebration. One was a 13th birthday party in the spring of 1987 for the Marthas, held at the home of Nancy Lyles, one of the founding members. On this occasion, the Marthas recognized the upcoming retirement of Polly Bingham with the gift of a silver biscuit box engraved with the first name of each member of the Marthas Guild.

Another was the celebration on May 22, 1988 of the Through-the-Week School's 25th

anniversary. This program had grown from a beginning with 25 children to 317 children and from 2 teachers to 36.

Still another cause for celebration was the effort by one member, Sarah Fulcher, to raise funds for charities such as Urban Ministries, by making a 2800-mile run for hunger across Australia. She was honored by the congregation with Sarah Fulcher Day on January 18, 1987.

Highlights in church life for adults included an adult retreat with Dr. Russ Montfort at Blue Ridge Assembly in January 1988 and Disciple Bible Study classes, which were first offered in 1985 by Rev. Joel Key, the associate minister. For the first course, the number was limited to 12, but 20 showed up, and Key let them all stay. Since that time approximately 200 people have taken one or more of the four Disciple studies. Perhaps as a result, Sunday School classes began focusing on Bible study, instead of inviting speakers to talk about various social issues.

The men of the congregation were reconfigured from the Associate Board to United Methodist Men in 1986, paralleling United Methodist Women. The women were busy making changes themselves. The UMW re-named the annual bazaar in 1984, calling it "Carolina Christmas Kitchen." The following year they put on "Brides of Yesterday," a fund-raising fashion show that featured women wearing their own or someone else's wedding attire.

The youth were on the move as well, sending four delegates--Margaret McLarty, Amelia Stinson, Karen Rasmussen, and Mary Martin--to the International Christian Youth Conference in Nassau, Bahamas. And a youth work team went to McColl, South Carolina, to repair storm damage.

With eyes on the future, a Long Range Planning Commission was appointed in 1987. And new computer capability was put to use storing up-to-date information on member families, which was gathered through the mailing of forms in 1985.

The congregation received two gifts during this period. One consisted of the plates and first print of a painting of the church by Stephen Sebastian called "The Inner Light." Limited edition prints, numbered and signed, were offered for sale by the Associate Board for \$100 each in celebration of Wesley Memorial's 25 years on Chestnut Drive. The other was needlepoint cushions for the altar chairs and kneeling cushions for the communion table, given by Harriss and Helen Covington, and created by congregational needlepointers, in honor of their three children: Ned, David, and Pam Covington DeRamus.

Another happening for the congregation came as a surprise: in the middle of Dr. Stockton's sermon on March 1, 1987 the lights in the sanctuary suddenly dimmed. Upon investigation it was found to Stockton's relief that this was not a message from on high; rather, a squirrel had created a short in the electrical system. Relief was shortlived when it was discovered that extensive damage had been done to the electrical system.

During the 1980s Wesley Memorial showed a growing awareness of outreach. In the early years of the decade, the church became known as "The Tomato Church" because canned tomato products were collected monthly for the Father's Table, a service of High Point's Urban Ministry. In the late summer of 1988 the church's first Habitat House was dedicated. Also, assistance was sent to victims of tornadoes in North Carolina, a building team went to Mexico, members participated in a Crop Walk for Hunger, parking spaces for the handicapped were designated, and a Missions Saturation weekend was held in May of 1985.

In the spring of 1986, Dr. Stockton and his wife Jean made a trip to Kenya and South Africa. Later that year, to celebrate the mission focus of Wesley Memorial, Max Meeks led the church in an event called "A Celebration of Christian Love" that featured music, displays of the church's outreach, and lunch. The Christmas offering that year, \$11,896.24, the highest ever up to that point, was divided among UMCOR, South Africa, Family Service, the Father's Table, and a district parsonage need.

Individuals reached out in their own ways. Wesley Memorial members, Bill and Alice Ervin, in 1987, gave a house on Arbordale Drive to UMAR to provide housing for five young men. In 1988 Irma Price (Mrs. Bill) and Joann McCuiston (Mrs. Bob) inaugurated the Chicken Pie Project, dreamed up one day when they were taking their regular walking exercise at Westchester Mall. They gathered 35 to 40 workers, men and women, to take orders, cut up about 800 pounds of chicken, and roll pastry. Hilde Errico (Mrs. James), a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, made the sauce using Jesse Millis's (Mrs. James) recipe. Soup was also made and sent to shut-in members. An average of 350 pies was turned out each time, with the proceeds, totaling almost \$30,000, being distributed to 20 or more needs on the local, state, national, and international level. The project continued several times a year up to the millennium and then concluded due to the waning capability of an aging work team.

Financially, during the late 80s, the church was in a good position. In 1988 the annual budget went over the \$1 million mark for the first time. At least one year during this period, the budget had a surplus of nearly \$10,000. The Finance Committee voted to use this money to re-furbish the Senior High Department. Attention was also being paid to building endowments to meet long-range financial needs, by inviting contributions to

the Wesley Fund. In addition, the Asbury Outreach Fund was established in 1988. Other special funds include the Good Shepherd Fund (for assistance to Wesley Memorial members in financial need), the Memorials Fund, and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Further, the property belonging to the church was enlarged through the gift of an adjoining lot by Richard and Betty Jo Kellam and through the purchase of the Loflin property on the corner of Chestnut and Florham.

Two new signs were put in place, one at the corner of Westchester and Chestnut and the other in front of the sanctuary. The sign at the corner had had low visibility since the widening of Westchester in 1975. To make it more apparent, the hollow where it had been located had to be filled in. The trustees voted to use a legacy of \$25,000 from Alex Whitley to make these signage improvements.

Howard Coble led the Chancel Choir on a series of eight European tours beginning in 1983. Joined by 13 choir members from First Presbyterian Church in Monroe, under the direction of Doris Morgan, 20 members from Wesley Memorial raised their voices to the glory of God in small churches and great cathedrals in Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and France. The tours continued in 1984 to the United Kingdom, in 1987 to Austria, Italy, and Switzerland, and in 1988 to Scandinavia.

In honor of the bicentennial of Methodism, the choir presented "Heritage in Hymns," a special program of 200 years of Methodist singing, on October 14, 1984. As well, they offered a performance of the Brahms "Requiem" in memory of Bob Fountain, who had been a choir member for 40 years.

November 13-16, 1986, was a memorable time for the choir. John Rutter, who is regarded by some as the Christian world's leading

composer of sacred music, spent a weekend at Wesley Memorial. Coble had been in workshops with Rutter on two previous occasions. At Syracuse University, hearing his "Requiem" for the first time, he said he was so moved he had to leave and walk alone around the campus for a while. He went back to the classroom and issued the invitation to Rutter that resulted in his 1986 visit.

On Thursday night and again on Saturday Rutter rehearsed with the choir for the performance of his new "Requiem," pushing them to do their utmost. Some still remember how hard he worked them. Coble advised his choir in advance: "You will be living in the presence of genius. Learn everything you can." Some 200 choral directors from across the state were invited to the Thursday night rehearsal. On Friday Rutter presented some of his music, and the choir and the congregation joined in the singing. For the Sunday worship the opening hymn was Rutter's arrangement of "All Creatures of Our God and King." This visit to Wesley Memorial was the last time Rutter was able to pay an exclusive visit to a single church, due to the growing demands on his time.

A roster of outstanding preachers and speakers visited Wesley Memorial during the decade of the 80s, among them Bishop Bevel Jones and Bishop Kenneth Goodson. From overseas came Dr. Reginald Mallett from England and Rev. and Mrs. Abel Hendricks from South Africa. Well-known writers Dr. Scott Peck and Dr. Maxie Dunnam came. Steve Sloan, lay leader and Duke football coach spoke, and Rev. Neil Wyrick came portraying Francis Asbury. August 23, 1984 was a significant day. For the first time an ordained clergy woman occupied the pulpit of Wesley Memorial: the Rev. Rosemary Brown from Tennessee.

Major staff changes occurred between 1984 and 1988. Rev. Joel Key came in 1984 as Associate Minister, and the following year

Willodean Hoskins (Mrs. Robert) became the first Director of Adult Ministries, coming from the staff of a United Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama. Ja Yong, from a family of Methodist ministers in Korea, became the summer intern from Duke Divinity School in 1987. Mary Walker, church hostess, retired in 1986 and was succeeded by Bettye Packer (Mrs. Buddy). Two stalwarts in the life of Wesley Memorial retired during this period. Charles McAnally, a lifelong member who had served the church in many capacities, retired in 1985 after 26 years as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Two years later, Polly Bingham (Mrs. Maxum) retired after 42 years of service, and Karen Fulcher was hired as Business Administrator.

Wesley Memorial proudly recognized all those ordained clergy who have a connection with the church: Tim Auman, Tom Latimer, Kathy Clontz Sherrill, Jill Auman, William Dills, Adele Byrum, Harold Austin, Bob Younts, Richard Crowder, Ronald Koonts, and David Baxter.

In 1988 growth in membership at Wesley Memorial topped 2800, but in July of that year, Dr. Tom Stockton was elected to the episcopacy and assigned to the Virginia conference. After preaching his final sermon, Stockton stood in the center of the chancel during the closing music and without a word from either of them, Dickie Wright, who faithfully occupied one of the front pews every Sunday, left the pew and went to Stockton, pulling a dollar bill out of his pocket and giving it to him, whereupon they hugged one another.

Dr. Robert Ralls, appointed by the bishop to replace Stockton, came to Wesley Memorial on September 1, 1988.



Chapter 30 "Grace and Peace" 1988 – 1992 Dr. Robert Ralls



Dr. Robert Ralls 1988-1992

Dr. Robert Ralls came to Wesley Memorial after serving for five years as District Superintendent in the Waynesville District. Before the Waynesville post, he had served congregations in seven cities. Born in Greensboro, he was

married to the former Aileen Fox. One of their two adult sons is also a Methodist minister.

Ralls graduated from Guilford College, received a B. D. degree from Duke Divinity School, and a doctoral degree from Drew University. He also studied at the University of Edinburgh. In addition to his pastoral assignments, he served on several conference boards, including the Board of Missions. In Charlotte he led a drive to build a church in India. He also led a carayan to Scandinavia.

After a period of financial well-being, Wesley Memorial, around the last decade of the 20th century, experienced the need to make adjustments in the budget area. For one thing, the Every Member Commitment team decided to adapt the budget for 1989 to fit whatever amount of money was raised, instead of what had been done, which was to try to raise enough money to meet whatever budget had been set. Also, prices went up for meals served at the church, first in 1989 to \$3.00 for adults for Wednesday night supper, and again in 1991 to \$3.50. *Update*, a supplement to *Mandate*, had to be dropped

to cut costs. The Finance Committee reported nearly \$100,000 in uncollected pledges for 1991 due in large part to financial hardships in a poor economy.

On the positive side, the Charge Conference approved in July 1990 the purchase of 5.887 acres of property adjoining the church campus from Richard and Betty Jo Kellam for \$382,700, using money from a trust fund plus a loan from the Wesley Fund. Moreover, the Asbury Room was refurbished with new carpet, draperies, lamps, chandeliers, and a screen hand painted by Ellen Freeze (Mrs. John) with Christian symbols--the chalice, the dove, the butterfly, grapes, and a pomegranate. Accordingly, new policies and rules were drawn up for the use of the room, one prohibition being the use of red punch or red cherries that might stain the linens or the carpet.

During this time the church leadership led the congregation toward both self-examination and spiritual growth. A Franciscan priest and author, Father Brennan Manning, was the resource person for an adult retreat in January 1989 at the Blue Ridge Assembly, on "How to Become People of the Spirit." In the fall of that same year, Bishop Monk Bryan conducted a series of spiritual renewal services. The Duke Lay Academy, featuring Dr. James M. Efird, began in the fall of 1990 a series of Bible studies that extends into 2005 and draws an average of 80 people, including many who are not members of Wesley Memorial. Further, in March 1991, Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr. delivered a series of sermons with the theme, "Spiritual Enrichment for Troubled Times."

After three years of research and study under the leadership of Bob Bundy, Wesley Memorial reached toward a higher level of spirituality through participation with other Methodist churches in Vision 2000, a weekend program of building faithfulness,

enthusiasm, and new growth led by Joe Harding and Jim Cowell as resource leaders, in the fall of 1990. This was followed in January 1991 by an adult retreat at Blue Ridge Assembly with the Osborne brothers, Barry and his brother Bill. "A Venture in Faith... A Response in Love" was the title of congregational meetings in September 1991 to engage in planning ways to nourish the church as a community of believers.

One outcome of this time of self-study and spiritual renewal was the 1991 Status Report of Wesley Memorial. The church, it stated, is known for its children's and youth ministries, for its music program, and for the involvement of its members in the community. It concluded, regarding the property, that the sanctuary and parsonage were in good repair, but that the education area, the fellowship hall, the dining room, and the kitchen were in need of repairs, that there was a need for additional handicapped parking and more lighting in the parking areas. Ministries needing development, it pointed out, involve single-parent households, day care for working mothers, support for shut-ins and older adults, victims of drug and alcohol abuse, and wiping out illiteracy. The report called for increased emphasis on prayer and Bible study, for the addition of an informal worship service, and for reaching out to inactive members. In sum, the report called for a new vision and a clear statement of purpose.

"Sparking Our Spirits," a weekend with Bishop Richard B. Wilkie in March 1992, was a response to the status report and the congregational meetings that had produced specific goals: to live the faith, to enhance worship services, to encourage prayer, to increase Bible study, to reach out to those in need, and specifically, to visit every member during the 1992 stewardship campaign. Sponsored by the Commission on Evangelism, the purpose of the weekend was to bring something to the spiritual life of the church and to encourage a first step in a closer walk with God. Saturday workshops were held on the following topics: Ministry of the Laity, Soul Hungers of Baby Boomers, Strategies for Reaching the Unchurched, and Youth as a Mission Field.

Mission Awareness was the focus for a weekend in the spring of 1990 with Dr. David W. Flude as the resource person. As a followup, ambitious plans were put into place to raise \$30,000 to build a three-room school at Kangwane, South Africa. Bricks were sold for \$100 each to fund this project. As the donations grew, so did a model of the school, designed by Harvey Barnett and built by Buddy Boyles. By early March, seventeen members of the Western North Carolina Conference, including eight from Wesley Memorial, were ready to depart for South Africa. Around this time teams were also going to Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Nassau, and Kenya. On the home front, Wesley Memorial members were joining Cities in Schools to provide tutoring, mentoring, and friendship to High Point schoolchildren. Church members also hosted a group of Russians visiting from Chelyabinsk.

Wesley Memorial began serving meals at the Open Door Shelter in 1988 while it was at the old YMCA on South Main Street. Adult Sunday School classes would prepare and serve the evening meal in a rotation with other churches. Yet before that, Wesley Memorial had a long history of supporting relief work for the needy of High Point through Open Door Shelter and Urban Ministry. Individual members Mary Garrett (Mrs. Jack), Carol Welborn (Mrs. Allen), and Bill Colonna, among others, were earlier busy feeding the homeless at what was called The Father's Table, an interdenominational effort that served lunch every weekday in an old building on South Main Street. A new building at 400 North Centennial Street was

put up in 1991 to house both Open Door Shelter and Urban Ministry. In 1995, Urban Ministry and Open Door Shelter merged to become Open Door Ministries. Wesley Memorial continues to actively support ministry to the poor and homeless in our community through Open Door Ministries.

On November 5, 1989, sanctuary worshippers found new hymnals in the pew racks, thanks to funds from memorials for Hulda Whitely, a longtime staff member. Dr. Austin Lovelace came as guest organist to celebrate the occasion. A year earlier the General Conference of the Methodist Church had approved the first substantial revision of the Methodist Hymnal since the 1870s. Howard Coble was at that time on the national Commission on Worship which reviewed and approved the hymnal proposed by a selection committee. The new hymnal offered more sing-able hymns as well as a broader base of musical styles.

Another musical event that year was the production of "The Gospel According to Peanuts" by elementary and middle high children of Wesley Memorial.

The next year, 1990, the chancel choir went once more to Europe to give concerts in Switzerland and Italy and to see the Passion Play at Oberammergau. In late spring of 1991, 43 choir members and spouses traveled to New York City for the choir to sing at Carnegie Hall the evening of May 25. Once again they were under the direction of John Rutter as they sang his "Magnificat" and his new "Te Deum," joined by other choirs.

A variety of things marked the closing of the decade of the 80s. In 1989 a video was created, under the sponsorship of the Council on Ministries, to depict Wesley Memorial's mission and ministries, with Roy Neal, member and retired television newsman, as narrator. A survey was made to invite

members to select the ministry work area they wanted to be involved in. The Chrismon Group created a scrapbook inventory of all the Chrismons made since 1972, with text and photos, and placed it in the Historical Room. The children in Vacation Bible School re-created a marketplace in the time of Christ, 29 A.D, with tents set up to house people weaving, making sandals, purses, and jewelry and engaging in storytelling and drama. Cub Pack #4, made up of 22 boys and Cubmaster Bill Milliken, received the Bishop's Award of Excellence at Annual Conference. Two adult Sunday School classes, Susannah Wesley and Peacock Bible, both dwindling in numbers, merged.

Encouraged by those who found his prayers profoundly meaningful, Barry Osborne collected them in book form under the title *From Within*. A book-signing was held in the Asbury Room on September 24, 1989. Wesley Memorial received another literary gift when the family of Dr. James G. Huggin donated his Biblical and theological library. These books were placed in the pastor's sanctuary study and arranged by Dr. Huggin's grandson, Jamie Collins. Following the God's Future Church renovation, these books were moved to one of the conference rooms for greater accessibility.

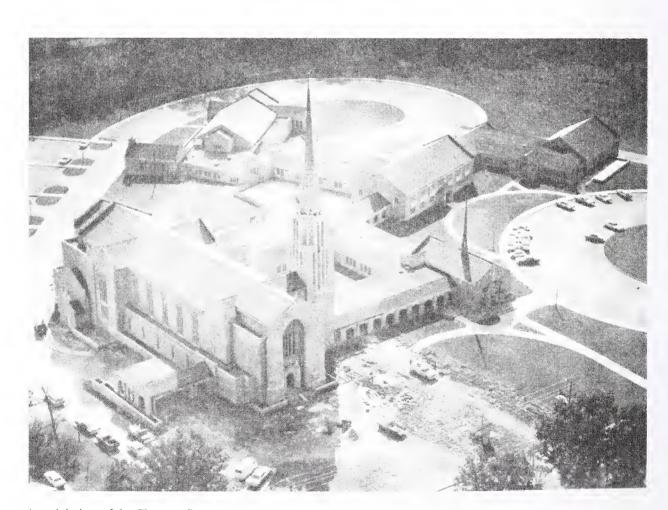
The staff saw a number of changes due to shifting of roles, retirement, and new appointments by the bishop. For better coordination of the overall education program, Barry Osborne was given the assignment of Minister of Education/Director of Youth Ministry. He also had the pleasant job of welcoming one of his own youth, Jimmy Marsh, back to Wesley Memorial as a summer intern in 1992. Jean Bowman was assigned exclusively to the Through-the-Week program, and the search began for someone to head the children's church school ministry. Evelyn Kallam (Mrs. Ron), secretary to the Director of Children's

Ministry, retired in 1989 after nineteen years. Two years later Mrs. Carolyn Brady, who had served for 28 years in various positions, retired as bookkeeper. Mrs. Leigh Curry joined the staff in 1990 as Director of Adult Ministries, following the resignation of Willodean Hoskins (Mrs. Robert).

At the annual conference in June of 1992, Dr. Ralls was reassigned to be Superintendent of the Lexington District, and Rev. Key was moved to Archdale United Methodist Church.

Dr. Julian M. Aldridge, Jr. and Rev. Ivan H. M. Peden were sent to Wesley Memorial as Senior Minister and Associate Minister respectively. Peden joined the Western North Carolina conference after he and his family - Carol--Carol, Sarah, and Luke - emigrated from South Africa where he had been pastor of a sizeable Methodist church there.





An arial view of the Chestnut Street campus

Chapter 31 "To Be a Church Alive in Christ" 1992 – 1997 Dr. Julian M. Aldridge, Jr.



Dr. Julian M. Aldridge, Jr. 1992-1997

Dr. Julian M.
Aldridge, a native
of Rocky Mount
and the grandson
of Bishop Paul B.
Kern, graduated from
Davidson College and
Duke Divinity School
with additional studies
at Union Theological
Seminary and the

University of Edinburgh. He also served as an officer in the U. S. Army Security Agency during the Korean conflict. Among the other positions he held are president of the Western North Carolina Board of Ordained Ministry, delegate to the 1992 General Conference, and trustee of Greensboro College.

His wife, the former Rebecca (Becky) Burns, whose father had been a Methodist minister in West Virginia, was a writer and adjunct professor of English at High Point University. The Aldridges three adult children are Mack, Rebecca, and Burns.

After Aldridge was assigned to Wesley Memorial, the Staff/Parish Committee invited him to interview three candidates for the position of Associate Minister. One of them was Rev. Ivan Peden, who had on earlier occasions, when he first came into the Western North Carolina conference, stayed at Lake Junaluska with both Garland and Jane Young and also Richard and Barbara Crowder. Aldridge and Peden both say that when they met for lunch, there was instant chemistry; they believe one of God's plans was surely at work.

In the fall after they came, Nido Qubein, as chairman of the 1992 Everymember Commitment Campaign, brought in a star-studded team that included television personality Art Linkletter, opera star Marguerite Piazza, author Rosita Peres, and Olympic gold medalist Diana Golden to help raise pledges toward the 1993 budget and its 7% increase over the previous year.

In 1992, Sarah Woollen (Mrs. James), a longtime church member and a teacher in the Through-the-Week School since 1966, was picked to be the new Director of Children's Ministry. Having worked with both Ann Tyler and Jean Bowman, she had caught their vision and would carry it forward and also expand it.

The tradition of presenting Bibles to the third graders has continued from 1922 when Mr. and Mrs. J. Ed Millis (Helen) established an endowment in memory of their son, James Edward Millis, Jr., to ensure that each child in the church would receive a leather-bound Bible that would last a lifetime. Since that time, approximately 2,500 Bibles have been given, and the Millis family has planned for this tradition to be ongoing. In the beginning Mr. and Mrs. Millis handed out the Bibles themselves, then it was done by one or the other of their surviving children, after that by grandchildren, and in 2005 by a greatgranddaughter and great-grandson. The giving of the Bibles was always accompanied by a personal visit with the children, telling them about young Eddie and showing them a photograph of him. For the past decade, each child also received a cross-shaped bookmark handmade by Dollie Vaughn.

Among the other components of the children's ministry have been a course, "How We Worship" for second graders, a course on human sexuality for sixth graders, and courses titled "God and Me, "God and Family" for children, and "God and Church,"

and "God and Life" for youth. Woollen and Dr. Aldridge added something new to the sacrament of baptism. Now, all the children in the congregation are asked to join the ministers at the chancel rail to witness the baptism, and then the baptized child is carried down the center aisle by one of the ministers as the congregation sings "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise."

Barry Osborne reported that Wesley Memorial's innovative youth ministry, begun by Warren Day as Project 13 and continued by Bob Howard and Osborne himself as Diakonia, counted 1,500 youth served over a 30-year period. His figures showed strong attendance on Sunday and 90% attendance at Senior High Workshops. He said, "Someone dared to dream and the dream was shared and passed on and turned over to God's grace and guidance."

Scouting is yet another arm of Wesley Memorial's ministry to children and youth. Boy Scout Troop #4, the oldest troop in the Uwharrie Council, celebrated 85 years in December 2005. Although sponsored by the church, the scouts held meetings elsewhere until the building was completed on Chestnut Drive, where space was designated for their program. Two long-tenured scoutmasters have sustained a level of excellence: O. Delk Smith from 1924 to 1942 and Lawson Ingram from 1963 to 1985. Ingram introduced the troop to backpacking in the Smoky Mountains and took scouts to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico and National Jamborees. Others active in leading Troop #4 have been Richard Stout, Steve Bouldin, Bill Milliken, Byrl Skidmore, and Bob Amos, III. In 1997, 11 scouts from Troop #4 attended the Jamboree in Washington, DC. The troop had sent three to the first Jamboree in 1937: Bob Amos, Jr., Jim Millis, Sr., and Charlie Ward. Traditionally at Wesley Memorial, on Scout Sunday when Eagle Scout awards are given, all Eagle Scouts present in the

congregation are asked to gather at the altar rail to be recognized.

Membership in the Friendly Club, although interdenominational, had long been a part of Wesley Memorial's ministry to older adults, but the membership began to decline after 1990 due to aging and poor health and competition from the Culler Senior Center and the programs of other churches. However, Senior Springboard, a program for Wesley Memorial members, continued due to the passion of Frances Frye (Mrs. Gaither) and Rev. Ivan Peden and Dwight Story. This group took trips, with Bill Linthicum or Bob Griffith driving the bus, to such destinations as the North Carolina mountains, the Outer Banks, and to Myrtle Beach to see the Rockettes. When Peden moved to Charlotte and Story took several years' leave, Rev. and Mrs. Joel Key (Faith) arranged the trips from 1998 to 2003 so that seniors could continue to have special times together and experience some of the world's natural and manmade wonders. Meanwhile in 2000, what had been the Friendly Club merged with Senior Springboard to form Live Alive, which presently meets at Wesley Memorial for lunch and a program the third Tuesday of each month. In the fall of 2005, Live Alive went to Flat Rock Playhouse, to Spruce Pine and Linville, to Washington, D.C., (to visit the Pentagon, the White House, and the offices of local representatives in Congress), and finally to McAdenville, N.C., to see the Christmas lights.

Changes emerged during the early 90s in the way members of Wesley Memorial worship. In 1995 monthly services of Wholeness and Healing were begun in the Chapel on Sunday evenings. That same year saw the beginning of regular contemporary worship services. Called "New Creation," these services began on March 26, 1995, with 46 worshippers and continued every third Sunday at 5 PM. A new form of service for remembering those in the

congregation who died during the preceding year was held on All Saints' Day and featured a brass ensemble. In 1994 a service of Imposition of Ashes was held to mark the beginning of Lent. All of these are continuing traditions.

A growing interest in Bible study, spiritual growth, and discipleship was linked to the beginning of Stephen Ministry training and midweek communion services, both led by Rev. Peden. The first four Stephen leaders-Ivan Peden, Polly Greene, Tom Greene, and Evelyn Hudson--trained in Orlando, Florida. In 1994, after 50 hours of training, thirty-two Stephen Ministers were commissioned. Since then, the number of trained Stephen Ministers has more than doubled. Another opportunity for spiritual growth was afforded by a workshop on spiritual gifts conducted in October 1995 by Rev. Mark Key, son of Joel and Faith Key.

The call to multiply outreach efforts was likewise being heard. The use of the Chapel was given to the congregation of the Korean United Methodist Church, under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Kwon, for their Sunday worship from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM. Another Habitat House was built and turned over to Antoinette Singleton, a single mother with four children. And Wesley Memorial hosted both a Russian youth choir and members of a Scandinavian carayan.

Members also participated in the Heifer Project, a program to provide families around the globe with livestock to raise for food. Moreover, support was given to needs closer to home. A mission team went to Frakes, Kentucky, and another team worked with Hands on High Point to contribute local assistance. Besides hands-on assistance, Wesley Memorial also contributed funds. A 1997 Mission Support Statement, for example, showed that \$64,075 had gone to 17 agencies within the community and

\$154,842 had gone to 22 agencies beyond the community.

On January 29, 1995, the Chancel Choir welcomed Paul Leddington Wright, director of the Coventry Cathedral Choir in England, as guest conductor for the 11:00 AM Sunday worship service. Wright also offered a master class on Saturday for organists and choral directors and gave a recital on Sunday afternoon. During that visit, he was trying to compose music for the words of a gospel hymn. In the middle of rehearsing other music with the choir, something came to him. As soon as the rehearsal ended, he went downstairs to the rehearsal piano and composed the tune which he named "High Point." Later in that year, in October, Wright returned with his Men's and Boys' choir for a concert. He accepted a commission to write an anthem in honor of Howard Coble's retirement and what Wright referred to as "a lifetime of music-making." The anthem's title is "This Is the Day." This Anglo-American relationship continued in June 1997 when the chancel choir traveled to Coventry to participate in the International Church Music Festival.

Other artists visited Wesley Memorial as well. Beth Harrison, an outstanding organist who grew up in the church, returned to give a recital on December 20, 1992. The National Cathedral Boys' Choir performed in March of 1995, the same month Wesley Memorial's own children's choir put on a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

A set of Schulmerich Handbells was dedicated on March 30, 1997, giving the worship team yet another tool to use to glorify God through music.

Aware of new directions in church life that were occurring across the country, a delegation from Wesley Memorial went to Charlotte to an Easum-Bandy workshop on small group dynamics and heard, among other things, this message: "We can't take for granted that what has been powerful in the past will continue to be so."

The Administrative Board, in September 1996, approved unanimously a new mission statement for Wesley Memorial: "To be a church alive in Christ." Ways of carrying out this mission were spelled out. They included such things as welcoming visitors by the use of greeters, signs, information; providing varied worship services; increasing awareness of opportunities for Christian growth and hands-on mission work; forming additional small study groups; exercising good stewardship over our resources.

Even before the new mission statement was adopted, ways of improving communication were initiated. Pastors began drop-in visits, going by neighborhoods. *Heartbeat*, containing additional coverage of events at Wesley Memorial, began publication on a semi-monthly basis on September 8, 1993. It replaced *Mandate*, which had been published since 1966. The next year *Heartline*, a telephone line for daily updates of events and news of hospital patients, was put in place.

Property improvements took the form of an expanded columbarium and a renovated kitchen. On All Saints' Sunday, November 5, 1995, a wall containing an additional 340 niches (for a total of 532) was dedicated. In his remarks at the dedication, Dr. Aldridge said: "It is blessed that we can provide such a place under the shadow of our spire which ever reminds us of the triumphant victory of the One who calls us beyond death and into life everlasting." Designed by Aaron Allred and built by George Stewart & Sons, its cost, \$180,000, was funded entirely by a loan from the Herman Smith Fund.

Due to code issues, the condition of the tile floor, the non-use of the cafeteria line, and the need for a small private dining room, some new equipment, and better storage facilities, a kitchen renovation project was approved in May 1996. In a special drive to raise funds, an amount of about \$500,000 was received. When the refurbished facility was ready, a gala celebration dinner was held on January 22, 1997, and featured beef tenderloin and apple pie.

The pulpit at Wesley Memorial was occupied by a wide array of preachers and lay speakers in the mid-1990s, from a police chief to several bishops. In June 1994 High Point Police Chief Jim Hoyng and businessman James Williams were guest liturgists for a Sunday set aside to honor "Peace with Justice." On another occasion, Dr. William Willimon, Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, preached along with Rev. John Fitzgerald, who as the son of Bernard and Carol Fitzgerald, grew up in Wesley Memorial. Rev. Barbara Brokhoff, who preached on May 5, 1996, was in the line of a growing number of clergywomen, including the new bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference. Bishop Charlene Kammerer, the first woman to be elected bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, came in the fall of that same year. Two other bishops occupied the pulpit at different times: Bishop Kenneth Goodson came for Commitment Sunday in 1993 and Bishop Bevel Jones preached in 1996. However, the most astonishing visitor to the pulpit during this time was Dr. Stan Menking, from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, who spoke on "How to Live and Have Faith in the 21st Century," outlining a changing paradigm for churches, which was troubling for many. He recommended that a church take a first step by studying the Book of Acts to discover the early church ways of being in ministry. The program staff did exactly that over a period of several weeks in late 1996. In succeeding years adult retreat groups studied the Book of Acts. These studies

eventually provided seeds for what later emerged as God's Future Church.

Wesley Memorial is very likely unique in having an opportunity to celebrate the naturalization of one of its ministers as a U. S. citizen. After Ivan Peden and his family took their oaths as American citizens, the church had a big All-American celebration on November 1, 1995, with flags, patriotic music, hats, hot dogs, and apple pie. More than 500 people welcomed the Pedens as fellow Americans.

As the church moved closer to the millennium, staff changes dominated the scene. In 1993 Rev. Jill Lindsey Auman, a Duke Divinity School graduate who had married into a Wesley Memorial family, joined the staff as an Associate Minister to become its first clergy woman. Rev. Joel Key, a former Associate Minister, retired in 1995 from Archdale United Methodist Church and came back to Wesley Memorial with his wife, Faith, to lead many mission teams overseas as volunteers. That same year, Dr. Richard Crowder, High Point District Superintendent,

also retired but not for long. Crowder returned to the church of his early years to become part-time Minister of Visitation until his second retirement in 2004. Two more, with 92 combined years of service--Howard Coble and Wanna McAnally---retired on July 28, 1996. Coble became director of choirs in 1954 and McAnally began as assistant organist in 1946. On the last day of their official service at Wesley Memorial, July 28, 1996, the choir sang "This Is the Day," the anthem written in honor of Coble by Paul Leddington Wright. A month later, Eddie Huss came to Wesley Memorial as Minister of Music followed in September by Dr. John Michener as organist. Finally, farewells were said to Julian and Becky Aldridge. Aldridge was moved to Charlotte to serve as Senior Minister at Myers Park United Methodist Church.



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Chapter 32 "Grace and Peace" 1997 – 2001 Garland Young



Dr. C. Garland Young 1997-2001

Dr. Garland Young came to Wesley Memorial from West Market United Methodist Church in Greensboro. He graduated from High Point College and received a Master of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School and an honorary

doctorate from High Point University.
Beginning in 1960, he served churches in Belmont, Concord, and Waynesville, as well as being Superintendent of the Gastonia District. He held several conference positions, including vice-chairman of General Board of Church and Society, was twice delegate to the General Conference, and has been a trustee for High Point University and Bennett College. He and his wife, the former Jane Johnson, a writer and elementary school teacher, have two adult children, Tina and Charles.

Between leaving West Market and coming to Wesley Memorial, Young had a month's sabbatical, which he spent primarily in a time of spiritual retreat. As the time approached when he would take his place at Wesley Memorial, he and Julian Aldridge arranged to have lunch at the Blue Lagoon on National Highway. By way of briefing him, Aldridge gave him a copy of the latest Wesley Memorial pictorial directory, annotated with useful information about the members of the congregation. Young recalls that his first day at Wesley Memorial coincided with Chicken Pie Day. He asked if this were a UMW

project and was told it was an Irma Price project. "Where do the profits go?" he asked. "Ask Irma," he was told. That day he also saw 80 middle highs return from Camp Linn-Haven, and he was amazed by how many young people and adult leaders were involved in that experience.

Three things stand out about Young's leadership at Wesley Memorial: new forms of worship, focus on issues concerning children, and discernment of God's direction for Wesley Memorial, made manifest in God's Future Church.

January 25, 1998 marked the beginning of a weekly service of contemporary worship at Wesley Memorial, indicated by the response to a monthly service begun three years earlier. Held at 8:45 AM in the Fellowship Hall under the direction of Debbie Averett (Mrs. Bob), it featured live music and a more informal, participatory style and came to be known as "The Gathering."

As well, the service in the sanctuary varied from time to time. A service of renewal for the vows of baptism incorporated liturgical dance. Subsequently, a group from Burlington, Liturgy in Motion, was part of the worship service on May 31, 1998, along with the adult handbell choir. Soon afterward, a liturgical dance group was formed at Wesley Memorial under the leadership of Jean Stockton (Mrs. Tom). On the first Sunday of 1999, the 11:00 AM worship followed the form of John Wesley's Covenant Renewal, and on New Year's Eve of that year, there was a prayer vigil in the chapel from noon to 5 PM and communion and fellowship from 9 to 11 PM. There was even an old-fashioned tent revival in March of 2001.

Drama as well as dance became a component of 11 AM worship. Margaret Anderson brought to Sunday worshippers her drama "Remember Me," based on the imagined servant Rhoda, who prepared the meal in the upper room for Jesus and his disciples. "A Celebration of God's Work," an 11 AM worship service ushering in the 1999 Every Member Commitment season, combined drama with music, dance, oral presentations, and slides to show the ways in which Wesley Memorial can claim to truly be "A Church Alive in Jesus Christ." Moreover, worship in the sanctuary was enhanced during this period by three additions: a gift from Phil Phillips to provide backlighting for the rose window in order for its colors and shapes to be better seen at night; two celebration tapestries, one depicting Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the other Jesus Calling the Disciples, made by the Slabbinick Company of Belgium; a processional cross modeled on the one over the altar, and also a processional banner with the same cross image and the words "Wesley Memorial, 1856." The banner, given by Helen Covington in memory of her husband, Harriss, was created on commission by Buni Southerland of Montreat, North Carolina.

The Music Ministry brought Paul Leddington Wright back to Wesley Memorial in April 1998 with his Coventry Cathedral Chapter House Choir and again on January 24, 1999 as guest conductor for the singing of the anthem "This Is the Day," which he wrote in honor of Howard Coble. January 2000 brought the group Acapella. Just in time for the 1999 holidays, the chancel choir offered a CD of Christmas choral music titled "Sing We Now of Christmas." In June 2001, the choir performed for the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. The youth choir put on a production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" in 1997 and joined with the youth choir of the First Presbyterian Church for a performance in 2001.

The playground received an upgrade in 1998. In the beginning, it had such limited

furnishings as a concrete pipe, a felled tree trunk, sandboxes, and a paved path for toy vehicles. It had been named the Caudle Playground in honor of Leona Caudle, a longtime early childhood teacher at Wesley Memorial. At a staff luncheon in the 70s, Bernard Fitzgerald asked why Wesley Memorial didn't have a better playground. Jean Bowman took that question to the Early Childhood Committee, and they formed a plan to bring before the Administrative Board. When the Board heard the plan, there was some objection on the basis of the aesthetic effect of playground equipment alongside the building. However, Dr. Kenneth Geddie, a respected pediatrician and member of the committee, spoke of the benefits to children of these improvements and the committee received the Board's approval to proceed, with the further aid of a sizeable donation. The result is a fourlevel playground with various climbing, sliding, swinging equipment appropriate to several age levels, a fort, a fireman's pole, a crab orchard stone storage shed, and most recently, a Noah's Ark. Bowman says the playground, instead of detracting from the building, has been an advertisement that says, "We believe in children."

A fountain, benches, and landscaping added beauty and significance to the columbarium. Donated by Oscar McMullan in memory of his wife, Frances C. "Judy" McMullan, and by Dr. Hal Ingram in memory of his wife, Irma Mervine Ingram, these were dedicated on September 26, 1999. As of 2005, all but 124 niches have been sold. At the present rate of sale, it is forecast that the inventory should last until 2013, when further expansion will be feasible in the same location.

In the area of the annual budget, giving for the fiscal year 1998 represented a 4%-5% increase in pledges. That had to be weighed against unusually heavy attrition. By the end of that year pledges for 1999 had dropped \$40,000 below budgeted needs. An alert went out that deep cuts in program would have to be made, and in a few days pledges for \$37,400 were received.

Church life took on several new dimensions around this time. The computer system was upgraded to accommodate email; a Pastoral Counseling Center, staffed by three from the United Methodist Counseling Center, was put in place (available by appointment); and Wesley Memorial men re-organized. The sister congregation of the Korean Methodist church, which had met in the chapel for four years, was honored with a luncheon and a program of special music on April 25, 1999.

In 1998, two members--Lula Raper and Gladys Horney--celebrated their 99th birthdays, and the following year flowers were placed on the altar in honor of Gladys Horney's 100th birthday! (By 2005, she had achieved 106 years!) After 50 years as an usher, Ellerbe Rogers retired from that job in early 2001. As for the young people, Molly Meisky went on a mission to Japan during the '98 Olympics, and Cameron Curry and Jennifer Davenport joined a caravan to Scandinavia, reporting to the congregation on August 8, 1999.

The area of Missions was highlighted during this period by a Mission Saturation Weekend in the fall of 2000 with guest speaker Rev. Paul Dirdak of the General Board of Global Ministries. Wesley Memorial's focus on the needs of people in High Point was shown in the hands-on effort to clean up the Macedonia neighborhood and in the formation of CORAH to explore healing of the racial divide. Nine people began meeting in May 2000, in response to a Third Rail Retreat. After six months, they had hammered out a purpose statement: To dismantle racism in ourselves, our church, our community, our world. Subsequently the group has become

involved in education, advocacy, and action. The Media Center has a CORAH corner, Heartbeat has a CORAH section, and plans are in the works to join with four other churches to form an action team.

Support by the church also went to such local mission efforts as transition housing for Urban Ministry, a new UMAR home, as well as global outreach in the repair of homes in the Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky, and a church in Puerto Rico and the sending of food for their relief to the people of Armenia and Nicaraugua.

Out of concern for the plight of children in the High Point community, Garland and Jane Young met with staff at Johnson Street Elementary School, where Jane was working. in February 1998 to brainstorm. One of the things that came out of that meeting was the imperative need for quality day care in impoverished neighborhoods. The next step was the formation of the Ad Hoc Group on Children's Issues, which began meeting in April 1998 led by Jane Young. In convening the group of more than two dozen members, with experience in either education or social work, Garland Young called attention to a timely newspaper article about poverty in the High Point area and its impact on children and schools. After also reading excerpts from the Bishop's Initiative, a document of the Methodist church related to the needs of children, and citing John Wesley's strong commitment to the same needs in his day, he asked, "Could it be that we at Wesley Memorial, with our concern, talents, and financial resources, are here for just such a time as this in our community?"

This ad hoc group became the Children's Issues Committee, chaired by Bill Anderson, and it invited others to join in the mission to seek the well-being of all children, to discern the needs of those in the local community, to educate others concerning these needs, to

devise means to meet specific needs, to plan programs and develop a corps of volunteers, and to be always guided by the example of Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit. On September 17, 1998, 40 High Point clergy accepted the Committee's invitation to come to breakfast and hear from Robin Britt, former U. S. Congressman and Executive Director of the Guilford Child Development. Further, Jane Young convened a group that developed a study to inform and educate church members on the plight of High Point's children and our call as Christians to discipleship. Called "The Child's Name Is Today," its three parts covered Biblical teachings, Methodist history, and the status of children in the local community. One outcome was that Wesley Memorial joined Communities in Schools in partnership with the Greater First United Baptist Church to give a range of volunteer assistance to Johnson Street Elementary School.

Meanwhile, the Council on Ministries, under the leadership of Barbara Coughlin, brought thirty-two staff and lay persons together for a retreat at the Children's Home August 18-19, 1998, for the purpose of creating a vision for Wesley Memorial. Cissy Parham, a fund-raising consultant for nonprofits, was the resource person guiding the visioning process. Two groups were asked to brainstorm over several assigned questions. They came back with the same message: What Wesley Memorial needs is a deeper spirituality and more openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit. The retreat had turned into a revival, and from that revival sprouted Our Future Church.

The initiatives that came under the heading of Our Future Church had even earlier roots in the report of the Long Range Planning Committee to the Administrative Board in 1990, calling for an overall vision for Wesley Memorial with Christ at the center, and also for attention to building maintenance,

expanded outreach, and emphasis on spiritual growth. Nearly a decade later a group of church leaders, already well aware of Wesley Memorial's collective needs and seeking a plan to get something done about them, met for dinner to hear from Bill Grigg, Grigg, the CEO of Duke Power and Bill McGuinn's roommate at Duke, had chaired a capital campaign at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte. He spoke about that process and brought materials to share. With a model to go by, a structure was formed over the ensuing months, and it consisted of three study groups (Facilities, Outreach, Program). a coordinating committee, and an advisory committee. Jeff Horney and Bee Rule cochaired Outreach, Barbara Coughlin chaired Program, and Susan Samuel chaired Facilities and later became co-chair with Buck Kester of the Building Committee, Ned Covington and Bill McGuinn were co-chairs of the Coordinating Committee, and Bishop Tom Stockton, headed the Advisory Committee. Almost 200 people were involved in the process in some way. In April 1999 the Administrative Board, meeting in the chapel because no other space was available that evening, gave the group the go-ahead to proceed with a major capitol campaign and to hire Robert Wiltshire as a consultant. The worship space seemed right for that meeting and has continued to be the site of the meetings of the governing group of the church.

Leon "Pinky" Safrit told Ned Covington he had a feeling something wonderful was going to happen with Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in the new century. And so it has. One member called it "a body of persons seeking discernment, then empowerment by the heart of God to walk the path revealed, a path unsurprisingly in harmony with the one made visible by Jesus."

The following September (1999), when Our Future Church was up and running, Jeffrey Horney and Bee Rule, co-chairs of the Outreach Committee, went to the Children's Issues meeting and invited a recommendation from the group. The Outreach Committee had convened with no agenda but to identify one global outreach project and one local outreach project; they were intent on being open to guidance from beyond themselves. They had invited representatives from a wide range of local agencies in search of needs Wesley Memorial could meet in the community. Finally, they came to the Children's Issues Committee because the focus that continually asserted itself was the needs of children and families. As a consequence, the recommendation formulated was that Wesley Memorial sponsor a five-star child development center located in a poverty section of the city; further, that the church either find a building or construct one and also provide volunteers to assist in the center. Thus was born the Macedonia component of Our Future Church.

During 1999, a number of adults were also involved in Third Rail Retreats, one in January at Brown Summit on the Book of Acts, and a second in November at Blue Ridge Assembly with the theme "A Spiritual Awakening: Opening Ourselves to the Power of the Holy Spirit." The second one was entirely lay-led by a committee made up of Diane Hamrick, (Mrs. John), Mr. and Mrs. Ed Cornwell (Jerry), Dr. John Hamrick, Dr. Mary Sansing, Dr. Les Hurrelbrink, Ginny Fick (Mrs. David), Preston Yarborough, and Debbie York (Mrs. Vaughn). The group totaled 54, including four program staff members as participants. The Saturday night session had been about witnessing for Christ and the cost of discipleship. Looming in the background was the group's clear awareness that there was a shortfall in pledges for the budget year 2000. The plan for Sunday morning was to have breakfast followed by a brief closing worship. What actually happened was not in the plan. A

spokesperson for one of the breakout groups from Saturday night stood up and challenged the group to show true discipleship through 2nd mile giving. He put a folded piece of paper in a basket and that piece was soon joined by others, until each member of the group had stepped forward and dropped into the basket a new pledge written on a piece of paper. When the newly pledged dollars were counted, they totaled over \$20,000.

The young people also had their say about Our Future Church. In June 1999 while at Camp Linn-Haven, the middle highs filled out a questionnaire about their vision of Wesley Memorial's future.

Finally, in December of that year Dr. Will Willimon came from Duke Divinity School and spoke to Our Future Church committee members about the challenges for the Christian church in the 21st century.

The winter and spring of 2000 was a time in the Our Future Church process for the congregation to draw together to learn and to respond to the plans of the working committees. A curriculum study, "Our Once and Future Church," was created by a committee of 13 and offered to adult Sunday School classes and other groups. The study was built around three questions: What has the church been? What are today's challenges for the church? What is God's call for our church in the 21st century?

On March 27 the Church Council (a merger of the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries) heard reports from the Program, Outreach, and Property committees. The emphases chosen were (1) to put the facility into top condition, (2) to build a family resource center in the Macedonia neighborhood and (3) to help build a Methodist seminary in Moscow, and (4) to add to the church program opportunities for spiritual growth through a new small group

ministry and through expanded lay leadership and (5) to build an endowment for future needs.

Two months later, May 21-23, 40 Response Groups, totaling more than 400 members, met in homes to hear plans, to ask questions, and to make comments and suggestions. Meanwhile the work of the committees continued with a delegation going in June 2000 to Christ United Methodist Church in Ft. Lauderdale to study the structure and workings of that church as a model for Our Future Church. Later a group also visited Dr. Mike Slaughter's church in Ginghamsburg, Ohio.

With God's direction discerned, studies completed, and plans refined, the shape of Our Future Church in terms of outreach, program, and facilities was presented to the congregation on September 17 at all three services. Days later, the Coordinating Committee came to a clear and compelling realization that Wesley Memorial must be about creating *God's* Future Church, not *Our* Future Church. Accordingly, the logo was changed.

With the approval of the Church Council and after a 24-hour prayer vigil, the Coordinating Committee proposed to the congregation on December 10, 2000 a capital campaign of \$15,553,000 (over 5 to 7 years) to support the comprehensive plans for God's Future Church at Wesley Memorial. This would be the fifth capital campaign for the church since the mid-1950s. Pledges were taken at the end of Promise Week in April of 2001 at a service in which Bishop Ernest Fitzgerald was the guest preacher. By the first week in May, 458 families had pledged a total of \$10,316,627.

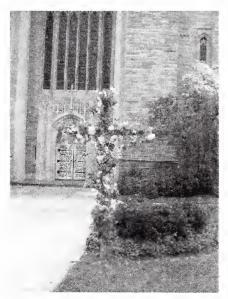
Beginning in early 2000, a Seed Group began meeting to explore creating a Small Group Ministry at Wesley Memorial. The group was made up of Jean Ann Brown (Mrs. Carroll), David Covington, Leigh Curry, Ginny Fick. Nan (Mrs. Rod) Fulcher, Barbara Geddie, John and Diane Hamrick, David McCoy, Dorothy Oliver, Jane Sizemore (Mrs. Frank). Jupy Stout (Mrs. Tom), Marcia Williams (Mrs. Joel), and Barry Osborne. Following a weekend retreat, they made a presentation to the Church Council on April 9, 2001 asking it to authorize going ahead with establishing a Small Group Ministry. Rev. Barry Osborne's duties were re-aligned so that he became Minister of Small Groups and Spiritual Enrichment. A logo was designed by Ann Linthicum to show the inward and outward direction of Small Group Ministry. After a period of training, 12 small group facilitators and 5 shepherds were consecrated on October 28, 2001, and 9 groups, known as Unity Groups, were formed.

God's Future Church and Small Group Ministry were not the only new things happening at Wesley Memorial. After a three-year study, a program of after-school care, under the direction of Marcia Williams, was added for children whose parents work. The program began in a renovated space adjoining the Fellowship Hall. Now called The Way Station, it is under the direction of Pam Hill (Mrs. Mark) and her staff of six and currently serves 43 children from kindergarten to grade 10.

Two Religious Arts Festivals occurred at Wesley Memorial, one in 1999 and another in 2001, under the direction of Eddie Huss. The first was held in October and was organized around the theme "Te Deum Laudamus," inspired by the Praise Window in the sanctuary. The festival began with a Thursday evening performance by the Carolina Brass and a Friday evening choral concert by academic choirs from Salem Academy, Greensboro College, and High Point University. A voice program was given on Saturday evening. The Sunday worship service incorporated music by each of the

composers represented in the Praise Window and closed with John Rutter's "Eternal God, We Give You Thanks for Music." Throughout the four days of the festival, visual artists exhibited works with religious themes in pottery, watercolor, sculpture, fresco, banners, and needlepoint in the Narthex and in the Asbury Room. The 2001 Festival had a logo created by Ann Linthicum using images of the various arts around a cross. Tom Hazleton, organist, was a guest artist, along with the Greensboro Youth Chorus and the Voices of the Triad. The choir, accompanied by an orchestra, gave an all-Mozart concert Sunday evening.

The visiting preachers during this period were largely familiar faces and voices-Bishop Tom Stockton, Dr. Bernard Fitzgerald, Dr. Claude Young (Garland Young's brother), District Superintendent Richard Howle, and High Point University President Jacob Martinson. However, Dr. Reginald Mallett, a Methodist minister and a physician came from England, and several representatives visited from the Diengenga Trade School in the Congo. From Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, came Dr. Leonard Sweet, known as one of the most provocative thinkers about the church



The Easter cross filled with flowers.

in the post-modern world. Sweet is Dean of the Theology School and E. Stanley Jones professor of Evangelism. He is also the author of such books as *Soul Tsunami* and *Aqua Church*.

Staff changes brought Rev. David Snipes in 1997 as Minister of Administration and Finance. As the Pedens were moved to First Methodist in Charlotte, Rev. Bev Gaska came to Wesley Memorial in 1999 as Minister of Congregational Care. Susan Sumpter moved up from assistant to Director of the Throughthe-Week program after Jean Bowman's retirement.

On February 14, 2001, Garland Young reported that the year 2000 had ended with a balance of \$180,000 and that he believed the church was moving forward in a good direction. Thus, he decided to retire after 41 years in ministry. In April the Bishop's office advised that Dr. Charles (Chuck) Wilson would be coming to Wesley Memorial from University City United Methodist Church in Charlotte.



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Chapter 33 "Just these lines, my friends . . . " 2001 – Present Dr. Charles (Chuck) Wilson



Dr. Charles W. Wilson II 2001-present

Dr. Charles (Chuck)
Wilson, although born
in Ozark, Alabama,
spent most of his
youth in Johnson City,
Tennessee, where
both of his parents
were educators. He
was schooled at East
Tennessee University,
Oral Roberts

University, and Claremont, California, with seminary training at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist and at Fuller Seminary in California. He received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He and his wife, the former Karen Payne, brought children into the parsonage for the first time since the 1970s: Chase, Ryan, Molly, and MacKenzie.

Chuck, age 46, became the youngest senior minister at Wesley Memorial in recent history and the first to use regular emails to communicate his spiritual messages to the congregation and the first to deliver a portion of his sermon in song. In his youth he had been a member of a Christian vocal group. In fact, he first saw Wesley Memorial in 1978, when he visited First United Methodist Church with that group. In 1990, when he came to Greensboro for Disciple training, he was given a tour of the church and marveled at what a beautiful facility it was.

That beautiful facility was in need of major repair and renovation by the time he arrived, and a major capital campaign was underway.

The original goal had been \$15,553,000 to bring the buildings to prime condition, to expand the facilities as well as program and outreach, and to create an endowment for ongoing maintenance. By June of 2002, 572 families had pledged to God's Future Church, but cost estimates, largely due to the need for asbestos abatement and more extensive tuck-pointing and drainage work had risen by 15%. A new goal of \$18 million was established along with new priorities for all three phases. Phase I would take care of existing property, and after that, the Macedonia outreach project and the Moscow seminary. The aim of Phase II would be to build a property endowment to the \$3 million level to take care of future maintenance needs. Phase III would be construction of additional facilities on campus for worship and day care.

Unbudgeted increases ran the costs of Phases I and II to nearly \$14 million. When God's Future Church reached the \$14 million level, the decision was made to pause to be certain that all the Phase I and Phase II work was done and paid for. The pause also gave time for the 5-year pledges to be collected. The plan was that when all parts of the first two phases are complete, Phase III will be considered.

Chuck Wilson had hardly settled his family in High Point before the terrorist attack on the United States. Later that same week, he called a special prayer service and gave the message, "We mustn't despair." A year later, on September 11, 2002, he declared a Day of Healing and Hope and had the bells tolled for five minutes during each of three services in memory of those who died.

Meanwhile renovations went forward beginning with the children's wing in June 2002. By the end of that year, the Building Committee took time out to re-consider its plans. What resulted was that new

construction was deferred indefinitely. And instead of an elevator for the use of those coming from the lower level parking lot into the sanctuary, new parking on a level with the sanctuary entrance would be created on the lots bordering Chestnut Street and Florham Drive. And instead of the Media Center being a new structure in the breezeway between the Administrative Area and the Adult Wing, it would occupy the area formerly used by the Peacock Bible Class. After the remodeling was complete, the teachers in the Children's Ministry arranged to have murals depicting Old Testament stories painted on the wall of the new Media Center in memory of Jim "Pappy" Woollen and in honor of Sarah Woollen.

Renovation work continued, area by area. The administrative offices moved into cubicles where the adult Sunday School classes had been meeting, and the 11:00 AM sanctuary service was re-located to the Dining Room for the summer of 2003. When it re-opened, the first baby baptized in the renovated sanctuary was Blake Carroll, son of Cliff and Mary Martin Carroll. Mary was the first baby baptized in the new sanctuary in 1968, 35 years earlier. With the completion of the remaining areas--the chapel, the adult wing, and the fellowship hall--Wesley Memorial had a sparkling new look. The grounds were made more welcoming with the addition of 72 parking spaces, 5 of them handicapped, for a total of 488; and also banners were added to the light poles on the circle, the first of seven seasonal sets going up for Advent in 2001. With all the hours of work complete and goals achieved, a service of celebration and re-dedication was held on Sunday, May 9, 2004, preceded by a Prayer Walk on Saturday through seven prayer stations around the church.

Nine months earlier another celebration had taken place. On August 10, 2003 members of Wesley Memorial, community leaders, and

residents of the Macedonia neighborhood packed the large multi-purpose room of the new Macedonia Family Resource Center for the opening ceremony. The \$2 million facility was designed to improve family life and to educate, the cost shared between the United Way (\$500,000) and Wesley Memorial (\$1.5) million). Construction by member Windley Dunbar's company took a little over a year and came in under budget. The largest portion of the building, 16,000 sq. ft., was given to United Child Development Services for its early Head Start program for up to 125 children from infants to age 4. Other space provided for classrooms, a computer lab, a satellite library, and offices. A community recreation area, with a baseball field, a walking trail, a picnic shelter surrounded the resource center along with new and affordable homes. Programs offered include such ongoing ones as evening tutorials for grades 1-12, GED preparation, mentoring for young adults and young mothers, and a baseball league. Also periodic programs are offered for job training and cultural enrichment. Wesley Memorial has 9 people on the 27-member governing board for the center.



The Macedonia Family Resource Center

A 2001 report on congregational life cited some of the year's highlights: highest ever attendance for the Pastor's Bible study, \$5000 raised by the youth and their adult leaders for God's Future Church, over 100 members involved in Unity Groups, 300 shoe

boxes sent for Operation Christmas Child, the UMW's highest offering of \$22,000 for missions, 587 visits made by a lay visitation team, a summertime Music Week for upper elementary children, a new body recall class for older adults, a fundraiser by the chancel choir (for tower chime refurbishment that was not included in God's Future Church) and called "It's a Great Night for Singing."

A new purpose statement, reflecting something of what was happening at Wesley Memorial, was unveiled by Wilson on April 28, 2002:

Our purpose is to make and sustain spiritually healthy followers of Jesus Christ who live in ways that transform the world.

To carry out the purpose, a plan was proposed and outlined by the acronym WMUMC:

Welcome persons to Christ and membership in God's family;

Mentor and nourish persons in spiritual growth;

Unleash spiritual gifts in response to discovering God's purpose;Mobilize for mission and outreach;Celebrate God's love through vital worship and passionate prayer.

Some time in 2001, member Lisa Hawley (Mrs. Faison) became aware of homes in High Point where children had no beds to sleep on. She took up the task of providing mattresses for these children, rallying help wherever she could find it, until a little over a year later, 700 mattresses had been collected and delivered to those homes.

Another individual member, Diane Hamrick (Mrs. John), led Wesley Memorial, to begin providing not only beds but shelter, food, and friendship for homeless families for a week at a time, every three months. Beginning November 17, 2002, this was

done in partnership with Bethlehem Baptist Church working with co-ordination from the Interfaith Hospitality Network. After three years, a number of families have been served and helped to get established on their own. In another joint effort, the Jeremiah Project, members of 20 churches joined together for a day of community service in several High Point neighborhoods and for a time of food and fellowship with a closing service of communion.

Two other members, Irma Price and Laura McFalls, began the Prayer Shawl ministry in early 2004, using as a model one begun by two women in Hartford, Connecticut. With a label, "Created by caring hands, given by caring hearts," prayer shawls are made by a group of nearly 50, invested with prayer, and then taken to someone who is ill or in need of comfort. The multi-age group of women meets every Wednesday for a time of fellowship, prayer, and knitting. By August 2004, they had distributed 88 shawls to people in High Point, in eight other states, in England and in South Africa. They have also made hats for young cancer patients, blankets for infants, and scarves for Wesley Memorial's high school graduates.

By 2005 the fruits of outreach were apparent in two particular locations. Ward Street Methodist, a church with a 75year relationship with Wesley Memorial, became a mission serving a multicultural, economically deprived neighborhood. A food pantry and a clothing closet were set up, vacation Bible school was offered for the children, and meals have been prepared and served there on a regular basis. Then, word was received that on May 24, across the ocean at Ndoleli, Kenya, water had issued from a well dug using funds sent there from Wesley Memorial. The well's water will serve the daily needs of 5,000 people as well as providing irrigation for a demonstration farm. The children of these same people

had earlier received funds for food from the Lenten boxes filled by members of Wesley Memorial.

Outreach giving in 2005 amounted to \$4,589 in pledges to Open Door Ministries, Interfaith Hospitality Network, West End Ministries Boys and Girls Club, and the sandwich ministry with an additional \$6,808 going to district and conference ministries. Using special gifts, \$866 was distributed for emergency relief to those outside the church family and \$1728 went to those in need within the church. The 2005 Christmas offering went to the High Point Jail Ministry, the Eternal Life Youth Ministry at Daniel Brooks, and to St. Mark's Church and School in Kenya.

The goal of local missions had become to increase the number of people served and the number of people serving, to develop disciples and servant leaders. Two models emerged, Macedonia Moms and the Jail Ministry. At Macedonia the members of one Unity Group meet weekly with 8 – 10 mothers of children in the Head Start program to enjoy lunch and fellowship and to read children's books together, exploring ways mothers can present books and Bible stories to their children. Likewise another team goes to the jail to conduct Bible study for the inmates.

Through its global outreach, Wesley Memorial touched such faraway places as Tijuana, Mexico, through a youth building team, and Birgia, Lithuania, and Puerto Rico through adult building teams. In fact, Wesley Memorial had a presence in 2005, through either financial or personal involvement, in 17 places in the United States and abroad.

Even as one part of God's Future Church, the part concerning the facility, proceeded, so did the enlarged emphasis on spiritual growth and program. In August of 2003, the Ministry Program leaders went on retreat and studied

the book by Michael Foss, *Power Surge*, about the transformation of the church from a membership model to a discipleship model with an activated congregation. The next year, with the creation of a fulltime position, Director of Lay Leadership, HeartWorks came into being to implement just that kind of change, using ministry discovery workshops and a system of placement, "to put the right people in the right jobs for the right reasons." Although it had taken three decades, the dream of the 1974 ad hoc committee (see page 120) was at last becoming a reality.

Bible study opportunities abounded through Wilson's Wednesday sessions, at noon and in the evening, through Disciple Bible Study, through the Duke Lay Academy, through Jean Stockton's Monday morning group, and through the Peacock Bible class on WMFR each Sunday morning at 10 AM, taught in turn by Bishop Tom Stockton and his wife Jean, Revs. Joel Key, Rod Fulcher, Jill Auman, Richard Crowder, Ben Loftin, and Gene Bohi.

One of the biggest things happening at Wesley Memorial during this period was the first-ever church-wide study that filled 40 days in the early fall of 2004. It began out of requests Barry Osborne had received about having a church-wide study of a single text. When Osborne came across John Ortberg's If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat, he was ready to proceed. Soon after Katherine Covington (Mrs. Ned) responded to an altar call at 11:00 AM worship and offered to be used in some way, she received a message from Osborne asking if she would consider organizing such a study. She said yes. Once she began to gather a committee of about two dozen people, including staff persons, the ball rode a fast-moving current that came to be known as WOW. Ten sub-committees were formed, 90 people were trained to be group discussion

leaders, about 50 home study groups were formed, plus existing Sunday School classes and Unity Groups became WOW groups. In all, more than 1,000 people, some of them not church members, participated in the study. Nearly 900 copies of Ortberg's book were sold and each week the Sunday worship services and the Wednesday night events combined to reinforce the content of the book. Mary Wood made banners for the sanctuary of watery-looking aqua, grey, and white fabric and draped the communion table with the same fabric. On top rested a boat with a cross inside, created by Charles Huff. Outside banners designed by Indie Miller (Mrs. Larry) and a fishing boat built for the circle by Pete Wilson proclaimed that Christians must get out of the boat if they want to be true disciples.



The boat that represented "WOW."

A Leadership Summit was held on February 20, 2005 to orient a gathering of 180 church leaders to the church's new directions. Led by Leigh Curry, Director of Lay Ministries, and the Lay Leadership Team (formerly Nominations), plus the praise band and choir, the presentation was made up of skits, power point visuals, oral messages, table discussions, and a video re-enactment of Jesus calling his 12 disciples. It covered four major shifts: from traditional to

servant leadership, from a membership to a discipleship church, from committees to teams, from recruitment to gift-based placement.

In September 2005 the Church Council gathered 55 church leaders to participate in a 2-day Future Search Conference led by Dr. Stan Menking, a retired professor from Southern Methodist University, who has mentored numerous churches in their quest for direction. The participants were broken into five groups to identify:

- 1. The most significant events in Wesley Memorial's past (relocation to Chestnut, God's Future Church, Contemporary Worship, commitment to children and youth, and to outreach).
- 2. The most important external trends that will shape our future (polarization, competition for time and money, breakdown of the family, demographics, secularization).
- 3. The most important internal trends that will shape our future (small group ministry, mission and outreach, aging congregation, evangelism, revenue strain).

From this information five "desirable futures" were proposed that will carry Wesley Memorial into the next 20 years:

- 1. Nurturing all age groups
- 2. Diversity in congregation and staff
- 3. Equipping laity for ministry and evangelism
- 4. Mission and outreach
- 5. Accountable stewardship

Drawing on these guidelines, groups will make concrete time and action plans for implementation and will unveil the plans to the congregation during the year of the church's 150th anniversary celebration.

Other events began and were ongoing. The first Fellowship luncheon following the 11:00

AM service occurred on February 3, 2002, the food prepared and served by a team of volunteers under the direction of Irma Price, Polly Bingham, and Bettye Packer. The Wesley Jobs Network was put into place to assist those experiencing job loss. MOPS (a support group for mothers of preschoolers) was formed in 2003. Good Sense, a course in the Christian approach to the use of resources, came into being in 2004, as did the Joel Team, charged with continuing to cast visions for the church's future. Safe Sanctuaries, protecting children from any form of abuse, imposed new rules for church life.

Guest soloist for the Christmas Eve Love Feast in 2005 was Anthony Dean Griffey, a Metropolitan opera star who is a native of High Point.

Human Relations Sunday, January 18, 2004, brought two preachers from the African-American community to Wesley Memorial's pulpits. Rev. Robert J. Williams of Williams C.M.E. Church preached at 8:30 and 11:00 AM, while Rev. Ron Wilkins of Grimes Street Baptist Church preached at 8:45 AM.

The Through-the-Week School, which is interwoven into the life of the church in outreach and intergenerational activities, received the conference's W.I.S.E award (Wonderfully in Search of Excellence) at a conference in November 2005, which was presented with the following comment: "The Wesley Memorial Through-The-Week School is the best example of Faith Development that we have observed. The curriculum for children reflects United Methodist theology. The curriculum helps the child see him/herself as a child of God who receives grace and participates in God's mission."

The early years of the 21st century saw a shift in the financial well-being of Wesley Memorial. The budget for 2000 closed

with a surplus, but by 2005, there was a budget shortfall of \$276,708, despite reductions in programming and increases in annual financial commitments. This was due, on the one hand, to higher costs for utilities, insurance, conference and district apportionments, and technical support and, on the other hand, to loss of financial giving through deaths and moves.

The early years of the 21st century saw numerous staff changes. Late in 2001 David Snipes was named President of the United Methodist Foundation in Charlotte. To fill his position as Minister of Administration and Finance, Wesley Memorial hired Sharon Lee, who came from Charlotte, where she was a Senior Vice President of Bank of America. Soon after coming, Lee made a decision to seek ordination in addition to performing her duties on staff. Bert Giles also came from Charlotte to succeed Barry Osborne as Director of Youth Ministry. In 2002 Michael Dougherty joined Eddie Huss as Organist/Music Associate. Bonnie Dixon, having come to the staff in 1993 as Media Center Coordinator and having served also as an Administrative Assistant to program staff, became Director of Communications in 2003. By this time Wesley Memorial had the capability of doing most of its printing and publishing in-house. The Media Center Co-coordinator in 2002 was Andrea Morris, succeeded the following year by Kathryn Swing Smith. In 2004 Leigh Curry returned to the staff of Wesley Memorial, after an interim in positions outside the church, to become the first Director of Lay Ministries. Donald Thomas came on staff in July 2004 as Director of Contemporary Worship, assisted by Jeff Harlow. A year later, after Harlow resigned to go to seminary, Keith Byrd became Music Director for Contemporary Worship and thus was the first African-American on program staff. That same year, Richard Crowder stepped down as Minister of Visitation, and Richard Howle,

recently retired as Superintendent of the High Point District, took that job and became affectionately known as Richard II.

A statistical profile of Wesley Memorial on the eve of its 150th anniversary would look like this:

Membership 2,396 Average attendance at worship 76 (8:30), 135 (8:45), 390 (11)

Adult Sunday School class enrollment 500 (12 classes)

Weekday Bible study enrollment 160 Unity Group members 322 (29 groups)

Stephen Ministers trained 70 UMW 186 (10 circles)

Choirs 100 (sanctuary choirs) 27 (praise choir and band)

Youth Program 100 active Children's Ministry 175 active Through-the-Week enrollment

308 (20 classes)

Way Station enrollment 46

The population of High Point had gone from 62,063 in 1960 to 93,352 in 2005; in the same 45-year period, the membership of Wesley Memorial went from 2269 to 2396.

More than numbers changed over those years. The name of the church was modified from simply "Methodist" to "United Methodist" after the 1968 merger with the United Brethren. Mandate became Heartbeat, the WSCS became the UMW, the Administrative Board and the Council on Ministries merged to become the Church Council, and committees turned into teams and subteams. The 60s brought a new emphasis on knowing God as opposed to knowing about God and intimations of a broader use of the small group format and empowerment of the laity in the work of discipleship. In the 90s these changes became the dominant reality. A paradigm shift took place toward more and more members actively engaged in seeking a more profound relationship with God, and in volunteering for hands-on service instead of

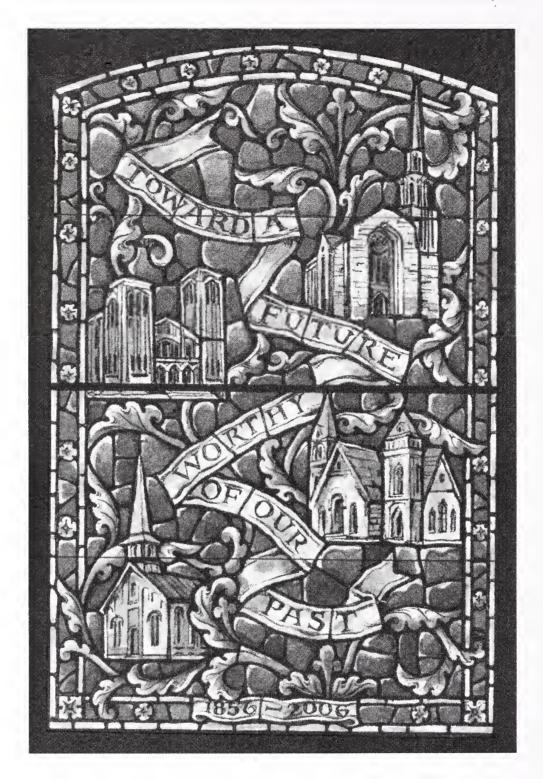
merely checkbook missionary activity.

Back in 1960, as the edifice in Tennessee crab orchard stone spread out over the land on Chestnut Drive, locals referred to it as "The Little Vatican." Some 45 years later, a Methodist leader in Greensboro introduced Dr. Wilson to a group as being the Senior Minister of "Fort God." Perhaps the church has now acquired the image it avowed in a publication from the 60s: "Wesley Memorial desires not to be a monument but a movement. The building is erected, not primarily to be admired, but to be used, for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom."

Sources: Documents in the Archives of the Historical Room, including the collection of bulletins, Mandates, Heartbeats, and other Wesley Memorial publications. Interviews with selected laypersons and staff, both present and former.

Author's Note: Virginia Gunn Fick has been a member of Wesley Memorial since 1960, a time period coincident with the boundaries of this history. However, her connection goes further back. She was baptized on Easter Sunday 1927 at Main Street Methodist Church in Danville, Virginia, by Rev. T. A. Smoot, who was pastor of Wesley Memorial in 1897 when it was still on Washington Street.





The 150th Anniversary Stained Glass Window is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Eva Dell Marsh by James P. Marsh and James P. Marsh, Jr. It depicts our four church sanctuaries with our anniversary theme, "Toward a Future Worthy of Our Past." The window was designed and created by the Willet-Hauser Architectural Glass Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the same company that designed and created our sanctuary windows in 1967.

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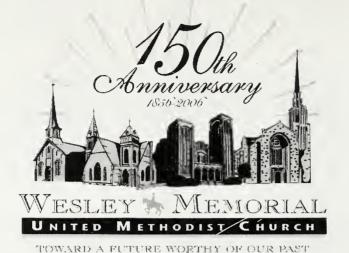
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